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A TWILIGHT BREATH.

O tender blue, with the pink above it,
O round white moon in the Autumn sky,
O heart of mine, what sign shall prove it,
The things that are hid in the "by and by?"

O dear dead roses out in the shadow,
Where are your souls, I would like to know?
O cardinal bloom in the marshy meadow,
Where do your leaves get their scarlet glow?

O fair fond life to the unknown tending,
Whither and wherefore do you glide?
O for some angel earthward bending,
To tell us the tale of the other side!

MIRIAM KARL.

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STING OF A WASP MAY BE MADE THE BITE OF AN ASP.

Coldham boasted of a public house—a low, dark building, with sundry obscure, gloomy chambers, and a bar-room.

This house—like many similar institutions in a small place—had proved itself a decided nuisance. Tressylian, the master, had ordered it to be closed a year or so ago, and it had remained shut up for a whole twelvemonth. There were lead-mines just outside of Coldham, however, belonging to Mr. Tressylian, that were still worked; and as the profits were considerable, were likely to give employment to a number of workmen for some time to come.

These workmen—many of them—had no home, and being compelled to have some place of lodging, the tavern, with its objectionable features, still proved itself a necessity. And one William Gray had obtained a lease from Mr. Tressylian, and reopened it.

Many of his rooms were taken. But stronger even than the necessity of food or comfortable lodgings, was the laboring man's afternoon drink.

"There were few enough pleasures for poor devils," they grumbled, "without being robbed of those few by the rich. It was all well enough for the master to sit up in his fine house, with his cellars full of wine, and preach temperance to them. They needed their afternoon grog, and would have it."

The "afternoon grog" became a morning, noon, and all-night grog. The superintendents of the works swore, and turned off the hands for every misdemeanor. It was of no use. Gray's house had been christened the "Laborer's Rest," and drunken men were often seen staggering about this delectable haven.

There was one man who ate and lodged there, who kept himself quite aloof from the dissipations and vices of the rest. This man was Dr. George Chester, employed by Mr. Tressylian some months before, as especial surgeon for the hands at the mines. He also practiced among the families at Coldham. Dr. Chester was a tall, blue-eyed young man, with a fine face and head; and was reputed a physician of extraordinary skill. Nothing had been known of him, when he came here in Mr. Tressylian's employment. Everything that had been known since, was favorable. He had made some warm friends; and as is frequently the case with obstinately truthful characters, he had some enemies. He was courteous and pleasing in manner however, and was supposed to be rather superior to the humdrum every-day people about him.

Dr. Chester kept his own counsel, read a good deal, and dreamed over his cigars, and an occasional bottle of claret. Nevertheless it had oked out that he was rather "sprying" Miss Lilian Thornton.

Now on the Saturday afternoon of the day on which Mr. Tressylian had gone over to old Mr. Godwyn's, the men had come in an hour or so earlier than usual, to be paid off; and were throwing away their month's wages in *roysterin*g fashion at the Laborer's Rest, when Miss Lilian Thornton and another young lady, returning from a meeting of the choir at the church just beyond, were seen to pass quickly along the walk about fifty yards in front of the door of Gray's tavern, about which a dozen or more loungers had collected.

"Confounded pretty—that Thornton girl," said a half tipsy bachelor, who delighted in the reputation of being rather fast. Good walk, and has style too. I'll stand treat for a champagne and oyster supper to any man that'll give me a knock down."

No one seeming exactly situated to go in for the treat, he turned to a young man at his side and slapped him familiarly on the shoulder.

"I say, Williams, you know that girl. I've seen you making eyes at her before now. Can't you introduce a fellow?"

"Not I, Attley, by ——," replied Williams, who had a suspiciously red nose and a pale, cadaverous face. "You might get 'knocked down' in good earnest, by a big, confoundedly stuck-up brother, if you were not more particular there than you've ever been in your life. Woole deuced set are proud, no end, because the young fellow dances attendance on Mr. Tressylian. But they'll have a taking down. They are no great shakes now, if the truth were but known."

"Another glass, Williams?" said Attley, who had all the delight of a mean woman for a bit of scandal, as he nodded to the barkeeper. "There is no harm about the Thorntons now—especially that deuced fine-looking girl?"

DR. GEORGE CHESTER DEFENDS LILIAN THORNTON'S GOOD NAME.

"I CALLED YOU A LIAR!" REPLIED DR. CHESTER, IN A CLEAR, RINGING TONE, "AND I REPEAT IT. YOU ARE A MALICIOUS LIAR AND SLANDERER, AND WHEN YOU ARE SOBER ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND ME, I AM PREPARED TO PROVE IT."

"For the matter of that," replied the young man, tossing off his glass of mean whisky with the affected *gout* of an experienced toper, "the mother is well enough, and the son too, if you could just give him a thrashing to take some of the airs out of him. Mary Graham wasn't pretty, yet she might have done better in my mind than to take him. But as for their fine sister, she's one of 'em."

"Don't understand you, my fine fellow. How?"

"Aw, a girl of the period."

"And that means—"

"Anything you choose. But I tell you what it is, Attley, if I had a sister I'd cut her throat before she should be seen walking with Lilian Thornton. Just came by here to excite the comments of these not very nice fellows."

"You had better mind. What makes you say that?"

"Trust me, I know what I'm talking about. She's setting her cap for a man here that she'd like to marry, but that don't prevent her being in love with another gay fellow, oh, no!"

"You don't say so," replied Attley drawing nearer. "Now I'll bet you I can tell you who the certain gay fellow is."

"Who?" asked Williams, with a haughty sneer, for he was beginning to be tolerably drunk.

"Mr. John Williams."

"Not I, by Jove!" he returned, angrily. "She's as airy around me as the next one; but for all that, she's in love with Lewis Hartman, whom nobody knows anything about, and she has been on the sly to his house to visit him—and he a bachelor, too."

"Good heavens, Mr. Williams!"

"Don't 'good heavens' me, sir! I'm blameless in the affair; but I and Hart Macon saw her come out of his gate with our own eyes."

"You are a liar!"

Young Williams whirled round, with a momentary crimson flush upon his face, and beheld Dr. George Chester, his blue eyes flashing with terrible anger, but a few feet behind him.

"Who called me a liar?" said Williams, with the usual declamation of a drunken man. "Every word I said is the truth, and I can prove it."

"I called you a liar!" replied Dr. Chester, in a clear, ringing tone, "and I repeat it. You are a malicious liar and slanderer, and when you are sober enough to understand me, I am prepared to prove it."

"I am sober now, sir."

"Again, you lie."

"Ha! ha! ha! You are a nice young man, undertaking to defend that jade, Lil—"

He had got thus far when Dr. Chester's heavy riding whip struck the brute across the face, leaving a livid gash.

Attley and several others sprang forward, but ere they could interfere, Williams had drawn a pistol, lifted an unsteady hand, and fired.

As the smoke cleared away Dr. Chester lifted his hand to his face. The blood was gushing from one cheek. Williams had been disarmed and thrust back.

"Gentlemen," said the hotel-keeper, rushing in, "I cannot suffer brawls here. Dr. Chester! Good heavens!"

"It is only a scratch from yonder drunken puppy," said the doctor, struggling to be calm. "He has wilfully slandered a noble lady, and but for involving her name I should cowhide him from one end of Coldham to the other, until he retracted every word that he has uttered."

"Gentlemen," put in Attley, pompously, for he was a justice of the peace, "the law will have to take notice of this. Fire-arms have been used by one or both of the parties."

"Not by me, sir," replied Dr. Chester. "There, waiter, throw that broken horse-whip on the dunghill. It is dishonored by contact with a villain's hide. And now, gentlemen, let this matter end here. There need be no appeal to law on my behalf. The venomous assailant of a woman's honor is beneath my contempt."

He was turning away, when some one brushed past him.

"Ah!" exclaimed Attley, eagerly, "here is Mr. Hartman himself. He will take up the matter on his own behalf if he has been slandered."

"Who has been assailing my honor?" asked Hartman, coldly.

"Nay," replied Attley, with a smile, "society, more lenient to you than to the weaker party, will readily condone your part of the transgression;" and he briefly explained to him the cause of the present commotion.

"Now let Hartman deny it if he can!" cried Williams, with a hiccough.

"By my faith, John Williams," exclaimed Hartman with a smile, that caused Dr. Chester to wait anxiously in the hope that his next words would leave him some pretext for knocking his angular body quite across the room, "if you were not such a drunken ass you would have provoked my serious displeasure. You are unworthy to take Miss Thornton's name upon your lips." He then explained to all present how Miss Lilian Thornton had been chased by a frantic bull, until she escaped at the peril of her life by flying into the nearest house, which chanced to be his, and fell fainting at the door; when, after his servant had administered restoratives, he had taken her instantly home. "That was the only occasion he knew of that Miss Thornton had ever been nearer than the main street to his establishment, and must therefore have been the one on which she had unfortunately given rise to the very gross suspicions of the young man present."

"Yet from the nature of a message you sent me while the young lady was in your house, any man here would have thought as I did," replied Williams, turning on him a look of stupid surprise.

"I am not responsible for your thoughts, sir," returned Hartman, haughtily. "But I warn you, if you are not more careful how you express them in the future, where I or any friend of mine is concerned, you will be held to a rigid account;" and he stole from the room again.

"After all," he chuckled, "for one man who heard my denial, a hundred will hear and spread yonder empty-pated coward's story without ever inquiring into its truth. I marked Dr. Chester's face, and if ever I saw a man's proud soul wrung, it was his. He loves her, I am sure of it; but I shall outwit his plodding honesty yet."

CHAPTER X.

THE SHADOWS OF EVENING.

Miss Lilian Thornton sat upon the rug, burning her pretty face before the fire in her mother's little parlor, reading a late novel, when George Chester sauntered in.

"I cry your mercy," he said, "for interrupting you in so congenial an employment; but the next hour threatened to be so intolerable in its boredom, that I have come to you to take it off my hands. When it is over, I promise to reward you by taking my leave, for I have to be away miles in the country at a consultation."

"And why should not every hour be useful and pleasant to you?" she answered, rising and taking the chair he had drawn up beside his own. "Will *sunset* always be your complaint?"

"A doctor is good at diagnosis, where everybody but himself is concerned," he replied, with a grave smile. "I have come to you, because, as I have told you before I could not help it, at least until you tell me I am not to come again. It is the story of the moth and the flame over again, Lilian."

She gazed, in silence, into the fire, her cheeks almost as red as the glowing coals.

"If that is the case," she said, softly, as she half lifted her eyes, "and you are determined to represent that very useless thing, the moth, to the end, you had better stay away."

"My dear girl, I can't," he continued, gravely. "Until you bar your windows and lock the doors in my face. Whenever I pass here an abominable little piece of poetry I used to read in my childhood comes popping into my head, and I think of you in the light of that fascinating creature the spider.

'Will you come into my parlor?' says the spider to the fly,
'Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy,'

and so I come buzzing in."

"Why will you speak of yourself in this manner?" she said, reproachfully. "I like to see men have pride."

"Because I like you to know me as I am, a dreaming, good-for-nought sort of a fellow. And still I am heartily ashamed, when I think how you must despise me."

The glowing cheeks and the downcast eyes told him quite a different story, but the hypocrite would never be satisfied until he heard it from her own lips.

"You want something to arouse you," said Miss Thornton at last, quite resolutely. "You have force of character, Dr. Chester, and great energy, but they are under a cloud. Some great shock has thrown you out of your sphere, and because you don't sail on in the same orbit, you are determined to be aspice. This might be pardonable, doctor, if you were a second Robinson Crusoe, quite alone in the world, but you are not. You are in the midst of active humanity, and if you don't look sharp, inferior mortals will begin to walk rough-shod over you. Coldham is not the place for you, Dr. Chester. You are too well educated and too refined for the people here. You should be where your equals could fire you with ambition."

"You are ridiculing me," he said, while the color mounted to his broad white brow.

"Not so," she replied, earnestly. "I know you are superior to the people about you here. They do not understand you, and you are unhappy."

"Let one person in Coldham understand me and I will be more than happy," he said, impulsively, catching both her hands in his own. "Lilian, you know what it is, I love you, my darling—love you with my whole heart and soul."

The pretty hands were trembling visibly, and he drew them against his breast.

"Lilian, I think I might have drifted quite away into nothingness if you had not stood on the shore of my wrecked fortunes to rescue me. You have heard, or your fine intuition teaches you one thing correctly: my father was an eminently wealthy man. I was reared in the lap of luxury, and dreamed away my young life in foreign countries. Fortunately he had remembered that riches are sometimes perishing, and had obliged his sons to select some profession in their youth. I chose medicine as a science that could afford me the most extensive field of interest, little dreaming that I should ever look to it for a living; and yet when the great crash came I found it the only resource left to me. Carroll Tressylian saw me when I first began to vagabondize about town. He knew of my father, and with the fine gentlemanliness that has always distinguished him, gave me the position I have here with a liberal salary; but it is the thought of selling my services here that robs me of all enjoyment to be derived from them. Once I could have told you proudly of my love. But now, my darling, I cannot get over the idea that it is an unfortunate thing for you, and that you would be happier in the long run if I had never crossed your path."

"Your views of your present life are wrong," she answered, resolutely. "Look at Mr. Tressylian himself. He sells his great talents to his clients, and why should not you? It is true there is no broad field of ambition open before you. When you are acknowledged a good physician, you are all that you can become; but think of the good you can do—the happiness you can confer."

"If you will help me, Lilian," he said "It is a hard thing to ask you to do, but I am lost without, for I love you, my darling, more than I could ever do any other woman in this world. You are sweet and clever and pretty enough to marry a very rich man some of these days. Will you sacrifice all such advantages by taking a poor fellow who has nothing to offer but himself?"

He was still holding her hands, when she lifted her eyes to his, and the long, silken lashes drooped upon her cheeks again. But that was answer enough, and George Chester caught her in his strong arms and held her against his broad breast.

The laughing blaze upon the hearth died obligingly away just then, and their lips met.

Make much of that hour in melancholy truth, George Chester, for long years must pass away ere those eyes look up into your face again with the tender expression of now!

"Shall we tell Ralph?" he asked at length, as he looked at his watch.

"Not yet," she whispered, with a sudden shiver. "Let us wait a little." And then for the first time she gained courage to look her handsome lover fully in the face, and saw the patch of court-plaster just below the temple. "You are hurt," she said with a tender concern that would have made him go over the wound every day, he thought; "and you have been so brave and strong as not to tell me. What is it, George?"

"A mere scratch," he said, with a smile. "A drunken youth was flourishing a pistol to-day, and the ball grazed my cheek."

She clung to him in visible terror at the great peril he had escaped.

"I know of a speedy cure," he continued, bending down; and kissing her once more, he rose to his feet. "The hour is past, Lilian."

"You must go at once, then. Oh, a doctor's life is a grand one! They may be waiting even now for you to assist in the relief of human suffering. Come."

She went with him out to the door, and stood with a softened light in her pretty face watching him as he rode away; she did not feel the cold, for her heart was throbbing in a tumult of emotion.

After a little she turned into the chamber. Her mother nodded in an arm-chair in the corner, and Mary stood behind Ralph's chair with a comb.

"Ralph and I thought of listening at the door Lilian," she cried, as that young lady came in, "I do so dearly love to hear Dr. Chester talk; but you need not blush so, for we didn't go."

"A woman's curiosity, Lil," said Ralph with a rueful face, as she pulled one of his curls, "and I had no part in it. What are you doing, vixen?"

Mary had taken a bow of blue ribbon from her own hair, and had drawn out a dozen more strands by the roots in twining it among his short curls.

"I'll let you off with that combing," he continued, drawing her around to his knee; "and now we'll hear if Lilian has anything to say for herself. Do you look for Mr. Hartman after tea?" he continued, turning toward his sister.

"Don't talk to me about that man," cried Lilian, with sudden energy. "I despise him."

"W-h-e-w!" said Ralph, with a slow whistle. "But there, do you hear a knock at the door? I'll wager a sixpence it is he." He got up with a smile and went out into the hall to open the door. The two women heard him utter an exclamation of surprise, followed by a few words in a lower tone; and then he came back into the room where they were sitting. He seemed painfully excited, and was very pale.

"It is Mrs. Tressylian," he said, in a low tone. "She has grown so uneasy about her husband, who has not yet come in, that she has come down here in the greatest excitement, to beg me to go and meet him. He did tell me, as he had done her, that he would be back by five o'clock; and now it is seven, but I hope his business has detained him. I am sure her being alone, with no one but her servants and her housekeeper this evening, has made her nervous. She is wild with terror, and declares that she feels a presentiment of evil. Lilian, get a wrapping and come with us. You can remain with Mrs. Tressylian until I return with her husband, which will probably be in half an hour, if he is not already at home."

"Where is she?" asked Lilian.

"I took her in the parlor for a moment. A servant is with her. She is quite passive, but I have never seen so ghostly a looking person."

"But what are you to do, Ralph?" asked his wife, anxiously.

"Go in quest of him, my dear," he answered; "the road between here and Godwyn's is a lonely and rough one, down by the river. He insisted, strangely enough, upon walking, and may have fallen and hurt himself. At any rate, I must go."

"Would he have had any money with him?" asked Mrs. Thornton, quite nervously.

"Yes," said Ralph, with a start, "a considerable amount. But what of that? You don't think—" and he checked himself.

"He may have been hurt designedly and robbed," she answered, with a shudder. "Oh, Ralph! I don't want you to go!"

"Hush!" he said. "You are usually brave and strong, Mary. If anything should have happened it is all the more my duty to be stirring. He has been a true friend to me. But, for Heaven's sake, don't let her hear you forming any such conjectures. Are you ready, Lilian?"

"Yes."

"Come, then. Good-night, my love," he stooped over and kissed Mary."

"Good-night!" she repeated. "Surely, you will be back in an hour at farthest, Ralph. Of course, you will ride?"

"No;" he answered. "The clouds have become so heavy that I could not see. If he is on the road I should be better able to find him on foot. You have nothing to fear for me. Everybody here knows I don't carry any money." Yet he kissed her once more, and walked from the room without looking back.

Mrs. Tressylian sat shivering before the dying fire, with a shawl drawn about her head and shoulders.

"Madam," said Ralph, taking her arm, "this is my sister—a young lady who has no nerves. She will go with us back as far as your house, and bear you company until I return with your husband, if we do not find him already there. You are unnecessarily alarmed, I think."

"He trusted you," was all she said, and that in a hollow tone. "Be quick, in Heaven's name, or I shall go mad!"

"One moment," said Ralph, as they stood at the door. "Tom Jones, a good, but queer fellow, who usually does my rough work, sleeps in the out-house there. I will call him to go with me."

The man came shuffling out as they reached the gate.

"Where in it, master, on such a night?" he growled.

"Never mind," said Ralph, half supporting Mrs. Tressylian on one side, while Lilian walked on the other. "You shall have a warm drink and a shilling when we get back," and they quickened their pace.

"You have not started any one before me?" he asked of Mrs. Tressylian as they neared the house.

"No;" she replied, huskily. "Those servants are strange to me, and somehow I feared to trust them. They know that he went for a considerable sum of money."

"I will just go in with you and see if he has not come," said Ralph.

"It is unnecessary," replied Mrs. Tressylian, with a shudder. "Something tells me he is not here."

"It is dangerous to be carrying money about, these times," muttered Jones, who had been listening to their conversation, "when master knows there are plenty of fellows who would knock off a man's crown for one."

Mrs. Tressylian uttered a sharp cry, and Ralph caught her in his arms as she was about to fall.

"Hush, you fool!" he cried to the man.

"You have been croaking like a raven all your life—and nothing has ever come of it yet. People here generally regard him as an ill-conditioned dog," he whispered to Mrs. Tressylian, "but I am sure he is but half-witted. There is Parkes, your butler, I will just ask him."

The man had lit the lamps in the hall, and stood at the door.

"Parkes," said Ralph, cheerfully, "has your master come in yet?"

"No, sir," replied the servant. "We have been looking for him every moment, these three hours."

Mrs. Tressylian's weight upon his arm increased.

Mrs. Roland, the housekeeper, came forward.

"My dear madam, where have you been? The master will be quite angry at your taking on so for nothing. You know you oughtn't to do it."

"She is frightened and ill," said Ralph. "Show her to her room at once; and Lilian," he whispered, "if she should grow worse, send Parkes down for Chester, until Mr. Tressylian comes. He is at hand, and prompt."

He said a word or two to Parkes at the door, and went out.

The snow was beginning to fall in large, heavy flakes. Yet the darkness grew momentarily more intense.

"Until Mr. Tressylian comes," mused Lilian, with an involuntary shudder, as she assisted the housekeeper in supporting Mrs. Tressylian through the splendid, solitary rooms, to her chamber. "God grant that it may not be long. I am strangely depressed; and feel as though the lives of all I hold dear were hanging upon the issues of this night."

As in bitter, mournful truth they were.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SEARCH.

The long winter's night wore away in terror.

Mrs. Tressylian lay conscious, but silent, and white as a corpse upon the bed, clinging in a helpless sort of way to Lilian Thornton's hand, murmuring only at intervals—

"Oh, if your brother would come!"

Lilian herself had grown visibly uneasy, and went from time to time out into the great hall; but the cold wind and the drifting snow sent her back with a chill at her heart.

Daylight broke drearily over hill and dale, now covered with an unbroken sheet of white—and still no news.

Mary Thornton had come up through snow a foot deep, to the great house, wild with alarm. As she sunk half fainting into Lilian's arms—Ralph, the servant Tom Jones, and two men from the village were seen coming slowly up the to the gate.

"In Heaven's name where have you been, and what have you heard?" gasped Lilian.

Every one noticed that Ralph was almost as white as the snow outside, and that he was shaking like a person in an ague.

"God help me!" he cried, "I have heard enough to feel assured that Mr. Tressylian is nowhere alive on the face of the earth to-day."

There was a terrific scream just inside the door—and Mrs. Tressylian, who had come out in her night-dress, fell in a death-like swoon across the floor.

"Don't say that; you shouldn't say that," put in Lewis Hartman, with a look of alarm. (Lilian had failed to notice that he was one of the men.) "Mr. Tressylian may have stopped somewhere for the night; or changed his mind, and taken the train for N——, without coming home."

"Never!" answered Ralph, sharply; "he would not have subjected his wife to the terror she has gone through for anything less than life or death; and how could he be concerned in either?"

"That is impossible to say," he replied, while Parkes, who had assisted them to bear Mrs. Tressylian back to her room, rushed out for the doctor.

"But where on earth have you been all night, Thornton, when I met you going about eight o'clock?"

Ralph Thornton's teeth were chattering until he could scarcely speak, and his explanation, the bystanders observed, seemed something confused.

He remembered meeting Lewis Hartman, as that gentleman had stated, between Coldham and Dunleath—a little settlement about half-way between Mr. Tressylian's residence and old Godwyn's farm. His attendant, Tom Jones, was with him at the time. He told Hartman about Mr. Tressylian's alarming absence, and begged him to turn back with him, and aid in the search; but Hartman, pleading the darkness of the night, and the certainty he felt that a gentleman who knew how to take care of himself as well as Mr. Tressylian did, was in safety somewhere, had insisted upon coming straight home.

Ralph Thornton had continued to go on with his servant; but the night was so dark that they had lost their way, and must have wandered several miles out of the true direction. It was about midnight, he thought, when they came to a solitary hay-shed—and Ralph having been taken with a violent chill, crawled into it and lay down, as he thought himself dying with the cold. He had begged Tom Jones to go on; but the poor fellow had refused, declaring himself afraid, and the two had remained for an hour or so, when the moon having risen, they could just distinguish their way.

After wandering around in uncertainty for some time, they got back to Dunleath. Here they were at length informed, Mr. Tressylian had called for a few moments, about dusk, at the house of Squire James Carstairs, upon some legal business; but had very soon after started again for Coldham, as they supposed.

Ralph Thornton being still bewildered and deathly sick, and fancying that Mr. Tressylian must have met them on the road before they lost their way, if he had kept on toward Coldham, imagined that Mr. Tressylian, who was usually precision itself, must have forgotten something and turned back toward old Mr. Godwyn's.

Ralph, himself, had passed the remainder of the night at Dunleath, indulging the vain hope that Mr. Tressylian must be safely at home long ere this; but that he might discharge his duty to his employer as well as he was able, he had finally prevailed upon Tom Jones to go on as far as Mr. Godwyn's. With the first breaking of the dawn, Ralph had got up and started back toward Coldham, sick as he was; for he knew how uneasy his wife would be at his singularly protracted absence. He was so weak as to be unable to proceed but at the slowest rate, and had been overtaken just outside of Coldham by Tom Jones on his return.

Mr. Tressylian had been at Mr. Godwyn's early in the evening as he had designed, but had not returned, after his visit to Squire Carstairs at Dunleath.

He had not returned home.

Suspicion at once arose among the people at Coldham that Mr. Tressylian had been foully dealt with on his way back—and being murdered and robbed, had been removed a little from the common highway to avoid immediate discovery.

A posse of the citizens at once turned out on a second search.

A terrible excitement prevailed throughout the place.

Ralph Thornton being confessedly too ill to be out of bed, was taken home by Dr. Chester's command, who declared his patient to have been attacked with a dangerous form of fever.

Tom Jones had called for his "warm drink," and muttering that "if it had been a poor man, the people would have considered the road side good enough for him to die in," had shut himself up in his shed.

There was one other thought in the minds of the people.

Mr. Tressylian may have lost the road, and, wandering for half a mile, the darkness being so dense that he could scarcely have seen his hand before him, have fallen into the river and been drowned.

Which was it?

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW CLIENT FOR "TRESSYLIAN & TEMPLETON."

Mr. Tressylian had left town on Friday, wondering more than ever at the great change in Earle Templeton.

He had considered him cold and reserved for some time past. He began to look upon him now as heartless.

Next to his wife he loved this young man better than he did any one else in the world, and it grieved him deeply to think that he had failed to gain the affection of the latter in return.

While in his office in the city a visitor had come in, a woman with a haggard face, and the rain and mist clinging to her black dress and veil. She was evidently poor and distressed, and Tressylian with the instinctive courtesy of the really fine gentleman that he was, rose quickly and drew a chair in front of the fire, begging her to be seated.

The woman complied, rather as it seemed from an inability to stand, than from any thought of being more comfortable, and drawing aside her veil with a trembling hand, stared wildly first around the room, and then at Mr. Tressylian.

Earle Templeton glancing up as the door opened, saw that the visitor was a woman, and kept on with his writing. He had been heard to declare recently that if clients were a dead expense, instead of a profit, he would prefer ten men to one woman. "A woman could never be satisfied that she might not have done better after all than to select you for her counsel. She would ask you more questions than the three judges to whom a student applies for license to practice, and would declare you not half the lawyer you were supposed to be if every answer did not prove her own case to be right beyond disputation."

He was therefore pleased to find Mr. Tressylian ready to listen to the plaintiff in the present instance.

"Pray, compose yourself, madam," said Mr. Tressylian kindly as he observed the woman's extreme agitation, "and believe me I will give you my entire attention, if that can aid you. You wish to see me on business, I presume."

"Yes," she replied, eagerly. "On business that refers to the life of four individuals, myself and my three children; for, if what I hear be true, you will sentence us all to death."

"I, my good woman, I—"

"Are you not Mr. Tressylian?" she again questioned rapidly.

"Yes."

"Then, sir, you are engaged in a most iniquitous business. My husband left a comfortable home to us, and you have engaged to rob us of it."

"I do not understand you," replied Mr. Tressylian, coloring. "Do not be nervous or incoherent. Pray explain yourself rationally."

"What is the use when you will drive me mad at last? If you are engaged on the side of my enemy, sir, the only kindness you can do me is to kill me with your own hands, or engage your client to do it. He would not hesitate a moment, but for fear of the law you pretend to enforce. I would willingly go to my death; but, sir, I cannot stand the slow torture of a lawsuit with the certainty of being driven out at last. I must die in that house. Tell him I will sign anything at once, you may write a will or a deed to-day, and I will put my name to it. Only he must promise to kill us with his own hands, and let us be buried there. You can defend him if he is discovered, and he need feel no apprehensions about being acquitted."

"I am afraid this poor woman's mind is unhinged," said Tressylian compassionately to Earle Templeton, who had faced around once more. "Have you any idea what she has been saying—any clue that might enable me to fathom her meaning?"

"What is her name?" asked Templeton, coldly.

She did not seem to hear him; and Mr. Tressylian, drawing his chair closer to her own, once more addressed her.

"Be kind enough to trust me with your name and the nature of your distress, and I faithfully promise to serve you to the best of my ability."

The woman turned suddenly and faced him, with an expression of disdainful incredulity.

"You are the man who cleared that wicked culprit, Basil Herndon."

She was alluding to the recent case that Earle Templeton had gained with so much *eclat* to himself.

Ere Tressylian could answer, Templeton fastened his dark eyes, with a searching expression, upon the woman.

"What is her name?" he asked again.

"Can you not guess that I am Henrietta Weston?" she asked, still looking only at Mr. Tressylian.

"She is the defendant in the case of Hartman versus Weston," explained Earle Templeton, quickly.

"Hartman versus Weston," repeated Mr. Tressylian, reflectively. "I do not remember."

"I took Hartman's deposition only on yesterday," replied Templeton, in the usual callous tone of a man long accustomed to every form of legal inquisition. Weston had bought the house and lot of Hartman, and has never paid for it. From the showing of the sheriff's books, Hartman has paid the taxes throughout. If he decides to eject this woman and her children, he has every legal right to do so."

"By a swindler's showing," said the woman, with intense indignation.

"Let the defendant show otherwise, and the case may assume a different aspect," answered Templeton, composedly.

"I tell you my husband paid every farthing of the purchase-money," said the widow, with the unmistakable confidence of a person speaking from conviction. "The money was left to me by a relation of mine. I saw him go out to meet Hartman with it, and return without it. He was never known to tell an untruth; he was never known to indulge in any form of dissipation. He told me that the house was secured to me and to our children, but that it was best to let it stand in Hartman's name for a while longer, on account of the peculiar nature of his embarrassments. He believed in the integrity of this monster as he did in Heaven, and died committing us to God and to him. If virtue and faith are so deceived in this world, can we even look for them with confidence in the next?"

"Have you no other evidence of your statement than your own belief in the matter?" asked Mr. Tressylian, anxiously.

"None. The plaintiff had free access to my husband's papers, and if there was anything to testify to the fact it has been destroyed."

"That is unfortunate," replied Mr. Tressylian. "Who is this Hartman, and where does he live?"

"His name is Lewis Hartman. He spends a great deal of his time in N——, but has wandered everywhere, I believe. He is either in the city or near it now."

"It is the man at Coldham, sir," explained Templeton.

"Ha!" replied Mr. Tressylian, quickly. "I had feared as much. Why should he come to you in my absence?"

"I really could not undertake to say, sir, unless he considered the firm represented in me," returned Templeton, coldly.

"Undoubtedly. But," added Mr. Tressylian, "Lewis Hartman had a reason for this. I trust you did not agree to undertake his case?"

"I did, sir, and shall go on with it, unless evidence is furnished that all litigation in the matter would be folly."

Mr. Tressylian bit his lip to conceal the annoyance that he felt.

"Earle," he replied, in an undertone. "I have reason to mistrust this Hartman; seriously to mistrust him."

"A man's clients are not always the best or the most honest people that he knows," returned the young man.

"Earle, Earle!" continued Mr. Tressylian, with an expression of pain upon his fine face. "I am sure I can prove to you that this Hartman is a fellow that even the least scrupulous attorney would wash his hands of. It does not surprise me to hear that he would endeavor to rob the fatherless and the widow."

"I am prepared to listen to you, sir," replied Templeton, in the same unmoved tone.

"My good woman," said Mr. Tressylian, turning to Mrs. Weston, "I had not heard of the case until this moment. I know something of this man Hartman, and on my soul I believe you; and I solemnly promise you, that so far from aiding him, I will give this matter my personal attention, and will do all in my power for you. I am sure you believe me."

Mrs. Weston had risen, and now knelt, weeping at his feet.

"May God reward you as you are true, sir," she cried. "I must believe in you, or I should die. And if you defeat the wretch who would throw dishonor on the memory of my husband, I will teach my children to bless you, and I shall pray for you with my last breath."

"You can return to your home in peace," answered Mr. Tressylian, "and, if I find Hartman to be the man I think he is, I shall force him to do you justice. That is all I can promise to-day. You can call here—let me see, on Wednesday next."

"May Heaven sustain me until then," said the woman, rising, and going toward the door, "and oh, sir! may God bless you for your compassion."

"Poor woman," said Mr. Tressylian, when she was gone. "It would be hard to go against her if we knew her in the wrong, for it is very evident that she believes the money to have been paid."

"Hartman says her husband gambled incessantly, and if he ever had the money, threw it away at cards, and was afraid to tell his wife," replied Earle Templeton, with something like a sneer. "But what is it, sir, that you know of the man?"

"He has taken a house at Coldham, and has attracted my attention in several ways," said Mr. Tressylian, with evident embarrassment. "I cannot tell even you my grounds of suspicion to-day. I shall ascertain everything fully by Monday, however, and I think I can satisfy you that he could be capable of any iniquity. If my suspicions be correct he leaves Coldham at an hour's notice."

Earle Templeton did not reply, and after a little Mr. Tressylian took up a book and read until he saw his carriage beneath the window.

"Earle is displeased that I spoke of a man whom he has engaged to defend, as a person whom no honest lawyer would touch," murmured Mr. Tressylian, as he drove away. "But, by heavens, if Carstairs's story be true, I shall prove it to him, or my name is not Carroll Tressylian."

CHAPTER XIII.

NOT DROWNED.

Mr. Eglinston had been telegraphed to come to Coldham. He responded in person, found his daughter in a state of delirium that rendered her unconscious of every surrounding, heard the story of the strange disappearance of his son-in-law with manifest horror, and sent to N—— for the most experienced detectives.

Earle Templeton had not been found by the messenger on Sunday. On Monday an officer called at his office, and briefly told him of the suspicious case at Coldham.

The detective, marking the cold, stern face before him, had begun in a formal business tone. The sudden change in the man electrified him. He had never seen such emotion in eye, lip, and quivering muscles. He almost feared his hearer was going mad, and that with his powerful frame he might spring upon him, as the supposed murderer, and take summary vengeance, then and there. His apprehensions on that score were, however, soon relived.

"And he was last seen on Saturday, at twilight?" asked Earle Templeton, in a husky tone.

"Leaving the house of Squire Carstairs at Dunleath."

"Do you think there is any hope?"

"You are asking me as man to man?"

"Yes."

"Then, sir, a murder has been committed."

A spasm of pain shook Earle Templeton's strong body.

"Do you suspect any one?"

The detective smiled.

"You are a lawyer, sir, and can be trusted. Our inspector is watching two men."

"Will you give me their names?"

"Not just yet, sir, even to you. I have my commands."

"Then," said Templeton, with hissing emphasis, clasping the officer's hand until he winced with pain. "You will hunt down these men, one or both. You will help me to bring them to the gallows, and your fortune is made. What is your name?"

"Sharpe. Inspector Catchem's force. Barracks No. 1."

"You will return to Coldham?"

"In half an hour!"

"I shall go out on the same train. You will need money. Here is a hundred pounds. Come to me when more is required."

"How he loved the man those devils have made way with," muttered the officer as he went out. "There was true feeling, if there is any such thing in this world! Thinking of this Templeton, I remember to have heard that there was some mystery attached to his childhood in some way. Could the other have been his father?"

In half an hour Earle Templeton was on the train. Detective Sharpe looked in, passed by him, turned back, and sat down in the next chair.

"This snow has impeded your operations, officer?"

"Confoundedly."

"Unless there is a decided change in the weather, it will remain on the ground some time."

"Foot deep on a dead level. It may be a week or so."

The excitement was still intense about Coldham, but nothing had been ascertained. Officers of the law were established at the Laborer's Rest, and were followed about with the eager interest and curiosity which their presence would be supposed to inspire in a small place.

Tuesday and Wednesday passed and the search on the road to Dunleath was continued, but the public curiosity was still unappeased.

Inspector Catchem, Sub-inspector Knox, and Detective Sharpe, continued their investigations.

On Thursday it rained all day, and the temperature was declared to have moderated greatly. The rain continued during the night, and on Friday the earth became visible in places.

The officers came in late in the evening, with mud to their boot-tops, but with the ends of justice seemingly no nearer than before.

On Saturday morning the operations on the river were concluded by Inspector Leashe. Mr. Tressylian had not been accidentally drowned.

The examination of the road was continued.

About noon a great cry arose from the hollow, about half-way between Dunleath and Coldham.

A number of laborers, who had been engaged in shovelling the remains of the snow from the road, had scooped up a hat much hacked and cut, and a hand stained with blood, which were recognized as having been worn by Mr. Tressylian on the evening of his disappearance, near a large furze brake, not far from the river.

The impression immediately and naturally became a conviction that Mr. Tressylian had been waylaid, robbed and murdered, and the whole population turned out to search for his body.

Ralph Thornton still looking ill, had come out for the first time.

Inspector Catchem had been suddenly called back to Coldham, where the news of the discovery of the hat had spread.

Earle Templeton was on the ground conversing in a low tone with Sub-inspector Knox, when Detective Sharpe was seen to signal his superior officer. Knox moved quickly forward, followed by Templeton, when the party suddenly came to a halt.

"My poor, sickly young man," said Detective Sharpe, suddenly clapping his hand on Ralph Thornton's arm, "I arrest you for the murder of Carroll Tressylian."

"How?" cried Ralph, with the wildest astonishment. "I, accused of the murder of my noble patron! Officer, are you mad, or am I?"

"You at least are more knave than fool," replied the detective composedly, slipping a pair of handcuffs over his wrists with remarkable dexterity. "Come, your accomplice has, after all, a tenderer conscience than you, and has confessed."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 16.)

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A FRIENDLY GLASS.

I have very weak and unhappy brains for drinking.
Oh, that man should put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains! —*Shakspeare.*

Lord Nortonshall returned to town without having formed any fixed design for his future proceedings, except the exposure of Frank Vavasour among his friends as a coward. Not that this proceeding would do the young man much harm. Any one knowing the two characters thoroughly would be fully aware that there must have been some powerful motive underneath the surface to make him act as he had done.

He had gone straight to his lodgings when he reached London, and shut himself into his room to think. There he was found some hours after by Austin Bertram, who expressed much surprise at his sudden return, and anxiously inquired if anything had happened to make him look so harassed and ill.

"Anything happened," he replied. "Everything has happened. I'm a disgraced man, Bertram."

"Disgraced?"

"Beyond retrieving."

"How?"

"I have refused to fight a duel, after having been struck, humiliated, insulted in the bitterest way. By this time to-morrow my name will be bandied about in men's mouths as a scoundrel, a traitor, and a coward, and I shall be powerless to offer any explanation."

"But surely something can be done?"

Austin Bertram spoke in the most sympathizing tone, and with a grave, earnest face, though all the while his heart was full of malicious pleasure at the quarrelling and mischief he foresaw in the future.

"Nothing."

"There must be some mistake."

"That's just it—it's all a mistake, a cursed mistake, from beginning to end. I have been down to Westerpark. I went off in a hurry to see a poor soul that was dying, and I met Alma—Lady Nortonshall, I should say—there."

"That was a pity."

"A pity! What do you mean by looking at me in that sort of way? Don't I tell you it was an accident? I should as soon have thought of looking for her in the great Desert of Sahara as there. I thought she was in Paris, and that it was her ghost I was looking at, so altered she is, poor darling! But this is not to the point. Our interview was only a few minutes long. She had come down on the same business that I had—the old gamekeeper's wife, Hodgson, you know."

"Yes," said Mr. Bertram, his interest in the story seeming to deepen suddenly at the sound of that name. "What about him?"

"Why, his wife, who has been lying ill a long time, persisted that she knew who had murdered poor Mr. Bouverie."

"Good Heaven!"

Mr. Bertram's face turned ashy white, and his lips quivered as he uttered this ejaculation, and the tone of it made Frank start. It was full of horror, such as a man might make when completely startled out of his self-possession by sudden fright.

"Why, Bertram, what's the matter?" Frank asked. "You look ghastly."

"I never can recall that night with any equanimity," he replied. "I suppose it is that I was out of health at the time. You remember I was ill?"

"Yes."

"Well, it never comes back to my recollection without unnerving me altogether. So this—this woman could tell who did the deed?"

"So she averred."

"And she sent for you?"

"Yes."

"And for her?"

"Yes, unfortunately; and she obeyed the summons at once, as any loving daughter would."

"And you heard the secret? You know who it was that killed our host on that dreadful night?"

"No I don't—that's just it. Who could have been Lord Nortonshall's informant I don't know, but he arrived on the scene last night like a madman, disturbing the dying woman, insulting me, and behaving most brutally to his wife."

"Then you never heard the secret after all?" Mr. Bertram's interest seemed to be concentrated on Mrs. Hodgson and her dying confession now, instead of Frank's adventure. "You never heard the old woman's story, then?" he repeated.

"No."

"Nor got any clue to it?"

"No, never; the intrusion and fright hastened her end, and she died from the effects of it, as I firmly believe, in the night."

"And told no one else?"

"No one."

The light came back to the questioner's eyes and the color to his pale cheek, but Frank Vavasour was too preoccupied to observe it, though he did notice the renewed interest with which the next question was put.

"And you have no idea who set Nortonshall on your track?"

"None."

"I can tell you."

"You?"

"Even so."

"Who was it? If I thought it was any busy, mischief-making wretch, wishing to harm her, by Heaven his life should pay the forfeit."

"Gently, gently, my dear fellow. No one told Nortonshall; it was fate—destiny—*kismet*—whatever the divinity may be that shapes our ends. Nortonshall saw you in the morning by sheer accident, and a few hours later the fates made him by the merest chance a spectator of my lady's departure also. He came here, as you say, like a madman, and would listen to no reason. I tried to make him believe it was a coincidence, and nothing more, but I might as well have talked to the winds. So he challenged you, my boy? It was well you did not defy him. He is a crack shot—never misses his mark."

There was a covert sneer in the words, which was by no means lost upon the young man.

"I would have met him if he had been the best shot upon the face of the earth," he said, warmly; "though I knew I should only leave the ground a corpse, but it was for her sake."

"How?"

"She begged me not to fight."

"She!"

"Yes."

"I beg your pardon, Vavasour," Austin Bertram said, with unaffected astonishment. "Do you mean to say that Lady Nortonshall interfered to prevent your meeting?"

"So far as asking me not to face his lordship in a duel, she did."

"You saw her again, then?"

"No."

"Then she wrote to you?"

Austin Bertram's eyes flashed with an evil triumph as he put the question, and waited impatiently for the answer. "She's going headlong to her own ruin, the little fool," he said to himself.

"Yes," Frank replied, unhesitatingly. "He locked her up—only think of that, the cowardly hound!—and left her by herself, but she found means to send me a note."

"Which, of course, you destroyed?"

"Which, of course, I did not. I have it here, poor darling—there's no harm in it. I shall never see her again, maybe. He's sent her off, the Lord knows where—perhaps he'll murder her—he's capable of anything, the blackhearted scoundrel!"

"Hush! anah! you are over-excited and worried," Mr. Bertram said, kindly, though there was a strange gleam of exultation in his face. "The best thing you can do is to go to bed and clear your head by a good long sleep before you attempt to think anything more about this unfortunate business. Have a glass of brandy and water, and—"

"I couldn't go to bed—I couldn't sleep, nor lie still. I'll lie down here for an hour, if you'll let me. I believe I'm about done up."

"With all my heart, my dear fellow. You'll be as safe from all intruders here as though you were locked up in your own room. I'll mix you a stiff glass—I've all the materials here. This is a bachelor's den, you know."

Mr. Bertram's apartment was a singularly comfortable room—as he said, a regular bachelor's den. He had everything handy, and the cupboard to which he went contained all he wanted for the preparation of the brandy and water. A little tin kettle was speedily set on the fire, and the spirits and sugar placed on the table by the couch where Frank had thrown himself.

"Will you have lemon, my boy?" asked the host, still busy with his head in the cupboard.

"No, thank you."

Frank was not watching him. He sat, with his head leaning on his hand, in a sort of stupor, apathetic from bodily fatigue, for he was anything but strong. He was conscious of a craving for the stimulant, and a dreamy sort of wonder what Mr. Bertram was so long about.

"Wake up, old fellow," he heard him say presently. "Don't go to sleep till you have had your dose."

"I'm not asleep," he said, rousing.

"You were deuced near it."

"I wasn't; I was watching you."

"Watching me!" Austin Bertram turned sharply round, with an angry look on his face. "What for?"

"Nothing; only in a lazy sort of fashion, I suppose. There wasn't much to see in your mixing that grog."

"I should think not, indeed. It's almost ready now—the kettle's singing."

There had been nothing to see, and after a little moving among decanters and glasses, Mr. Bertram brought the tumbler to the table. In a very few minutes a glass of steaming hot spirits and water was in Frank Vavasour's hands, and his host was advising him to drink it off before it cooled.

"Have anything to eat?" he asked.

"I couldn't swallow a morsel—a crumb would suffocate me."

"So much the better," inwardly ejaculated Mr. Bertram; "it will be all the more powerful on an empty stomach." Aloud, he said: "Well, drink it, at all events! It will warm you, and you may, perhaps, sleep after it. You shan't be disturbed."

"I am sleepy," the young man remarked, a few minutes after he had finished the liquor, "but I've eaten nothing to-day, and you brewed that very strong."

"I did. I thought it would do you good. Lie down and forget all your troubles, and you will get up quite strong and fresh by and by."

"Are you sure I shall not be in your way, Bertram?"

"Not a bit."

"You are very kind. I am sleepy—ah—h!" and, with a portentous yawn, closed his eyes.

"Sleepy! Of course—I meant you to be sleepy. Pleasant dreams to you, my lad. We'll have some coffee when you wake, and go to the Elysium, and have a chat with La Claudia."

"Claudia! She will despise me—I cannot talk to her now."

The words were spoken in a dreamy way, and ere they were well out the speaker was fast asleep.

"Neatly done!" murmured Mr. Bertram, as he watched him sink back upon the couch. "A few minutes more, and if he has that note about him it shall be mine. What a green young fool he is! If there were any truth in what Lord Nortonshall believes, there would be none of the outspoken frankness my lady and this foolish boy show. Well, that's nothing to me. It suits my purpose that he should think them guilty, and it will be no fault of mine if I don't make him certain of it. Now, to commence operations on Mr. Francis Vavasour—the task won't be difficult."

Not very, apparently, for the sleep was now more like death than slumber, and the unconscious form offered no resistance to the searching hands that proceeded to make a thorough investigation of every pocket. Truly the brandy had been very potent, or there might have been something added from Mr. Bertram's array of bottles. Doubtless he had many a drug under lock and key that he could find useful in emergencies like the present.

Be that as it may, his visitor slept soundly enough while the contents of his pockets were examined. The object of the search was in a secret pocket-book—a hurried, crumpled little note, but very welcome to Austin Bertram's eyes.

He replaced the other papers with extreme care exactly as he had found them—he had a quick eye and light, skilful touch had Mr. Bertram—and then put the book back in the pocket, and stood watching the sleeper.

"Pretty well for an innocent wife!" he said, with a sneer, when he had read the piteous little letter. "No harm—oh, dear, no!—only anxiety for her *friend*, Mr. Vavasour, and very lovingly expressed. No wonder he wanted to keep it! It's just the thing a lovesick boy treasures and moons over while there is a bit of it left legible. I have you now, my lady, and you, too, Mr. Frank Vavasour! I doubt very much whether my lord and the world in general would believe in the innocence and purity of the lady who sent such a letter to an old lover. It will be safer with me than with the owner. And my lady will hope the note is burned, and Mr. Vavasour there will think it is lost, and they will severally worry and fret themselves about it, little dreaming how very safe it is after all."

And Mr. Bertram locked the note up in a safe repository only known to himself, and sat down to wait Frank's awakening, remarkably well satisfied with his day's work.

CHAPTER XXIX

CLAUDIA HEARS A STORY.

And how comes love? Like morning light,
Love comes not at thy call;
And when dies love? A spirit bright,
Love never dies at all. —*Mrs. Lorell.*

While all this was taking place at Mr. Bertram's rooms, Lord Nortonshall was on his way to town. When he arrived he could rest nowhere, and hardly knew where to begin his plan of vengeance against Frank.

"Where can I sting him worst?" he asked himself. "How humiliate him most? Ha! a happy thought, Claudia! I'll strike the first blow through her. I'll make her despise him, and then—why, then I may stand more chance with her. A woman cannot love a man she despises, and she will turn to me."

He dressed hastily and went to Claudia's house, but she was already gone to her duties at the theatre.

"Would his lordship leave a message?" the servant inquired.

"I'll write a note," he replied, and was shown into the pretty room that the actress usually occupied.

On second thoughts he altered his mind. He would drive straight to the theatre and see her; he would say nothing on paper, and he turned to the bell to summon the girl who had let him in to tell her so. As he did so his eye fell on the carved casket which he had once seen open, and a sudden idea flashed into his mind.

"I opened it once," he said; "I wonder if I could do it again. If I could—if I only could! Claudia never looks into it, and it would make my vengeance secret and sure."

He left the house to follow the actress to the theatre with as fell a purpose in his heart as ever was conceived. He had resolved to rid himself of his hapless wife forever, and that by a shorter process than any law court could furnish; in fine, he had resolved to murder her, and was revolving the time and mode in his mind as the carriage rolled along. Claudia he resolved should be his by fair means or foul, and the few minutes' visit to her pretty room, where every inanimate thing seemed to speak so eloquently of her, had roused his passion for her, which she had always baffled so quietly, to a terrible pitch.

"She shall be mine," he murmured; "she will, she must, when she knows the perfidy of him she is making an idol of; and when she is out of the way, curse her, why, then—aye, then, my bonnie darling—you may be 'my lady' if you will."

There was no mistaking who "she" was, had any one heard the muttered soliloquy. The passion in his tone was frightful, and the very thought of her seemed to drive him to frenzy.

"Shall it be in Yorkshire?" he asked himself. "Shall I go down to Nortonshall, and—no, I think not. Sudden death—or any death, indeed—makes such a stir in those out-of-the-way places. I'll bring her to London, she shall be an invalid, and unable to go out and see her friends, and then, when the end comes, she will be wept and wailed over in the proper orthodox style, and I shall be condoled and sympathized with, and have pretty girls set their caps at me, as they never did when I was a poor bachelor, with a wholesome horror of bailiffs, and an intimate acquaintance with the Jews."

Thus did he ruthlessly plan to kill his unoffending wife, who had rescued him from ruin with her fortune, and saved the broad lands of his forefathers for him. Arrived at the Elysium, he inquired anxiously whether Mr. Vavasour had been there.

"Not behind, my lord," the doorkeeper answered.

"Nor Mr. Bertram?"

"No, my lord."

"Then she will hear my story first," he thought, as he went up-stairs: "and if I don't make it a good one it will be strange."

Claudia was on the stage when he got to the wings, thrilling and entrancing the audience as usual, but she smiled a recognition to him as she caught his eye, and presently joined him when the drop fell at the end of the act.

"You played truant last night, my lord," she said, gayly. "It was too bad. I wanted the support of all my friends."

"Was not Mr. Vavasour's place vacant as well as mine?"

"He was not here," she replied, in surprise, "but that was unavoidable. He was called away from town on urgent business."

"He is a villain—a double-dyed villain. The cowardly scoundrel!"

"My lord!"

She started back a step or two, for his tone frightened her.

"Aye, you think I am mad," he went on. "I dare say I seem so; but I'll tell you all about it. Have you a 'wait' in this piece?"

"Yes; nearly half an hour after this next scene."

"I will tell you then. The story is common enough, and will not take long in telling."

She joined him in the green-room when she came off the stage, and in a very few minutes he had told his story—the story he persisted in believing to be true.

He told her how Alma and Frank Vavasour had planned a meeting, and made use of the old man and woman to bring it about—how he by an accident had discovered where they had gone and followed them, to find them walking in the moonlight together, to see them clasped in each other's arms, and hear their protestations of mutual attachment.

All this was very hard for Claudia to listen to. She loved Frank with all the devotion of her young heart; it was a love that grew with every passing hour, and strengthened in spite of the conviction that he only regarded her with a brother's affection. Esteem and respect he gave her abundantly, but not love.

All this considered and thought of, it still gave her a sharp pang to hear of his speaking the words of passionate love which she would fain have heard to another, and she hid her face for a moment on her bowed hands.

Lord Nortonshall tried to speak sympathizing and consoling words, telling her it was better she should know it—that his own heart was breaking, &c., &c.; but she made no answer. She did not like to doubt his word so plainly spoken, yet she could not help feeling there must be some terrible mistake—some dreadful illusion—Francis Vavasour never could be so base. If he had no love to give her, he never could be such a scoundrel as to deliberately strive to undermine the happiness of a husband and wife in that manner.

"You are very silent, Claudia," his lordship said at length. "What do you think of your suitor now?"

"What I have always thought, my lord," she said, quietly; "that he is honor itself."

"Not according to our English code," he replied, with a slight sneer. "Honorable gentlemen generally respect other men's wives."

"An honorable gentleman would have been dumb forever, Lord Nortonshall, before he would have told a woman the story you have told me. I decline to believe it."

"You doubt my word?"

"No."

"What then? My eyesight is very piercing. I told you I saw and heard what I have told you."

"I doubt neither my lord—only your judgment. There is a mistake somewhere."

"Not in my story, as you call it. What I have told you I saw. But there is more for you to learn about this young gentleman, who is 'honor itself.'"

"What more?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Go on."

He winced a little at the tone in which she spoke, but went on, nevertheless, to tell her how Frank Vavasour, after doing what he had done, had refused him the only satisfaction that one gentleman can demand of another.

"But I will be even with him," he said. "Ere to-morrow night every club in London shall ring with his name, posted as coward; all men of honor will shun him from henceforth—all women despise him."

"Not all, my lord."

"No. There's one will be maniac enough to think him a victim. I don't mean you, of course."

"I shall think so, my lord, until I know the truth. Ha, Mr. Bertram! How are you? I missed you from the stalls."

Austin Bertram's entrance diverted their attention from what they were talking about, nor would Claudia again refer to it, though Lord Nortonshall reverted to the subject in a few minutes.

"I would rather not hear any more about it, to-night at least," she said, "and I must leave you now. The next scene is mine."

And bowing somewhat stiffly, she left him to go upon the stage.

Lord Nortonshall hardly knew what to make of the way in which she had taken his communication; but he was the first to tell her, that was one thing, and he had created a distrust of Frank in her mind, that was another. Notwithstanding her proud vindication of the honor of the man she loved, he could see that the mischief he had designed to work had commenced, and he felt sure he should succeed by and by in turning her love into hatred and contempt. He could not see Claudia's heart, nor understand how the coarse, unmanly way in which he had spoken of his wife must have disgusted her pure womanly nature.

It was so. From the hour that her husband maligned her she felt a strange interest in the unhappy lady of whom she had heard so much but never seen. There was a coarseness in his manner and a flippancy in his words when he had spoken of his wife which seemed to the actress to show more a desire to injure his wife than a real conviction of her guilt, and she felt a strange desire to see this woman whose fate seemed such a hard one, and who was in such terrible trouble.

She thought about the unhappy Alma while she was going through her business, and her image of the suffering lady was with her as she drove home alone, for there was no Frank to escort her that night, and she declined any other service. She kept trying to picture to herself what she could be like—her age, her disposition, her appearance, &c.

"It seems all like a horrible dream, a nightmare," she said to herself as the carriage stopped, and her maid came out to receive her; "but I'll hear what Frank says himself—he'll tell the truth. He may not love me, and if this horrible story be true, he does not, but he won't deceive me."

While she was driving home Lord Nortonshall and Austin Bertram were talking together in the green-room of the theatre she had left. Every one was engaged in the bustling burlesque which followed the drama, and the room was deserted.

"I knew I should find you here, Nortonshall," Mr. Bertram said, "when they told me at your place you had gone out immediately on getting home. I rather expected you would have called on me first."

"Why?"

"He's come home."

"I know that; at least I know he left Westerpark by the first train to London, the cowardly hound."

"Nay, you blame him too much, you do not know the pressing cause he had to start off in a hurry."

"I think I do. I can guess, at any rate. It was her doing somehow, though how she managed it puzzles me when I think of it."

"Would you like to know?"

"Can you tell me?"

"I can."

"Has he made you his confidant?"

"He always does. I am his very good friend and adviser. Your wife wrote to him and stopped the duel—a letter you would like to get hold of, I fancy."

"And he showed it to you?"

"Hem! Well, I have seen it, at all events. He told me where it was, and I took the liberty of looking at it."

"And where is he now?"

"At my place, sleeping off the effects of a glass of brandy and water which I entreated him to take."

"And mixed for him, doubtless."

"Exactly. And I fancy his nap will be a long one. Would you like to see the letter? I am afraid my lady wrote it in a hurry. It is rather illegible. You will soon have enough of materials for a divorce, if you want to get one."

He put the crumpled bit of paper into his companion's hand as he spoke, and watched him read it. When he had done so, he crushed it in his hand.

"No," he said, fiercely, "no divorce for me! Of course she's driving at that—but I'll balk her. What would a ruined character be to her, so that she could go off with that sailor fellow? He would look upon her as a suffering innocent, and she would regard him as a hero, and they would care nothing for this world or anything in it and be happy. No, Lady Nortonshall, you are mine, and mine you shall remain as long as you live!"

There was a terrible significance in the tone in which he uttered the last few words, and Austin Bertram started as he heard them.

"Surely he is never insane enough to mean that," he said to himself; "he must be mad! Nortonshall—"

"Well."

"Let me give you a piece of advice."

"What is it?"

"When you are playing for high stakes take care not to show your hand. You did it then, or I am very much mistaken."

CHAPTER XXX.

GONE.

Put this in any liquid thing you wish
And drink it off; and, if you had the strength
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.
—*Shakespeare.*

Lord Nortonshall made no answer to his friend's remark. He knew his thoughts had been read, and said nothing. Austin Bertram was the first to break the silence by asking where Alma was.

"At the castle."

"A prisoner?"

"No."

The word was so hesitatingly spoken that Mr. Bertram knew at once that his lordship was prevaricating.

"I don't half believe you, Nortonshall," he said; "I believe she is a prisoner."

"Well, something very like it. Mother Jones will obey my instructions to the letter. She and Brown will treat her with all respect and politeness, and yet keep a tight rein all the same."

"And are you going to keep her there forever?"

"All her life! Oh, no."

"What are you going to do with her?"

"She shall come to town very soon—as soon as I have settled on a place to put her in."

"And does he know where she is?"

"He cannot; for when she wrote this loving letter she did not know herself where she was going. I don't intend he shall know either. He's seen the last of her—the very last."

"And Mrs. Eversfield?"

"Left Westerpark this morning before I did. I suppose she was afraid to meet me, and no wonder."

"Where did she go?"

"I suppose she came to town—but I don't know. I humbly hope I've seen the last of that amiable lady for some time. I gave her such a piece of my mind last night, as she is not likely to forget for some time. She shall have no more to do with her niece, I promise her. I've had enough of her guardianship of my wife."

Francis Vavasour found ere four-and-twenty hours had passed over his head, that Lord Nortonshall had kept his word as far as he could, and made his name a byword and a reproach.

Men whom he knew and respected turned away from him in contempt, or passed him by unnoticed. Everywhere the withering stigma of cowardice seemed to attach itself to him, and make friends and enemies turn from him alike. It was very hard to bear, but for Alma's sake he would have borne even more than that. She had bid him brand himself with the name of poltroon, and he had obeyed her—but it was a bitter trial.

But for Claudia he would have left London and turned his back upon the coldness and distrust which met him on all sides. To her he told the story of his meeting with Alma, and she felt that it was true. It wrung her heart with sharp pain, and stung her proud spirit to the quick to hear him speak of his early love and his broken hopes, but she hid her agony to cheer and comfort him as a loving sister might have done.

"Stay and live it down," she counselled; "besides, she may want your aid—who knows? You might some time be able to clear her name and yours from this foul calumny; and then, would you leave me without a friend? Your friendship and counsel have been very sweet to me."

Frank's heart smote him as he looked into Claudia's pale face, with a patient, sad smile upon it, and he took her hand and kissed it.

"I will stay, Claudia," he said. "Let them do their worst. I will live down this foul slander. He shall right her yet."

So it was for Alma's sake, not her, that he endured. Claudia sighed at the thought, and choked down the swelling in her throat as he bade her good-bye.

"Duty for me," she said; "my profession and its duties; no love, and hope, and joy, such as other women feel. Plenty of flattery, and admiration, and praise—but no love, no home ties. No husband to take me in his arms and tell me I have done well; no little children to nestle in my bosom, and lisp the sweet name of mother. No, I am Claudia Wynne, the actress—a thing to be looked at and maybe admired, but never loved. I would give all my triumphs for the friendship of a true heart."

Austin Bertram gave Frank the same counsel that Claudia had done, though in a different fashion.

"Go away," he said; "nonsense! It will all blow over after a bit. Nortonshall will calm down, and my lady will take her place in society, and the thing will be forgotten."

He knew better when he spoke. He knew Lord Nortonshall's fell purpose as clearly as though it had been told him; but he had a purpose of his own to serve in persuading the young man to stay.

For two or three days Frank hardly stirred out, except to drive over to Bayswater; and even Claudia's society had scarcely charm enough to exorcise the demon of melancholy which possessed him. He stayed on in town, thinking hopelessly and sadly of Alma, and striving to decide on some means of helping her in her extremity.

He could think of none. No one would believe his assertion that their meeting was accidental—and the husband's story was received as the one to be credited. It was very natural, perhaps, but very galling to him nevertheless, and he could do nothing but chafe impotently under the wrong he was enduring.

No intercession or interference of his could do Alma aught but mischief. He did not even know, for a certainty, where she was. Once he essayed to see Mrs. Eversfield, who had returned to her town residence; but she was still smarting under the recollection of the insults Lord Nortonshall had heaped upon her, and the sight of Frank Vavasour's card revived all her troubles afresh.

"Tell that gentleman," she said to the servant, "that I have suffered so much through mischief of his making that I never wish to see him again."

And the man delivered his message verbatim, with such an addendum of insolent manner that poor Frank hurried away from the house, that had once been such a paradise of love and hope for him, almost beside himself with rage and despair.

And so the first few days of his great misery passed by, and its edge was just a little blunted when one morning Austin Bertram told him suddenly that Lady Nortonshall was coming to town.

"I told you the thing would blow over, my boy," he said. "Nortonshall is too sensible a man to play the dragon over his wife, for all the world to laugh at him. He is going to put her into her proper place again."

"Her proper place?"

"Yes, as mistress of his house, to be sure. You will see her as gay as ever."

"She was never very gay—that is, since she has been his wife; but I shall not see her."

"Why not?"

"I shall leave London—that is, if your story be true. If you had told me he was going to kill her, it would have been easier to believe."

"These are not the days of Bluebeards," Mr. Bertram said, with a laugh that was not at all real in its sound. "And as for your going—pooh! nonsense! London is wide enough for both of you."

Frank pondered much on what he had heard. He felt sure it was not any forgetfulness of the past, but some deeper motive that prompted Lord Nortonshall's actions, and he questioned Claudia the next time he met her as to whether his lordship had made her his *confidante* in the matter.

"He has only spoken of his wife once to me, and that was the night he came back from that unlucky place," Claudia replied.

"Then you know nothing of his plans?"

"Nothing."

"What did he say about her?"

"I hardly know. He spoke of her in such a way that I told him what I thought pretty plainly. I don't think he will do it again."

"The cowardly hound!"

"Yes, that's just what he is; but let us drop the subject—it's not pleasant. Don't you wonder what makes my room in such a muddle?"

"Is it in a muddle?"

"Is it," said Claudia, laughing, "when you can barely find room to sit down for the litter? Have you no eyes?"

"Well, it is not in its usual state of neatness, I must confess."

"I'm changing my room, and I'm going to sit at the back for the future. I fancy this is draughty, and, besides, I'm annoyed by people staring in at the front gate continually. They seem to think I'm a wild beast, or something of that sort."

"Popularity has its inconveniences. I suppose the furniture is partly moved by the state of things here."

"Yes; Dorothy and a workman are revelling in their arrangements—measuring, fitting, &c. I am going to have a glass shade for my casket to fit the stand. It is too delicate to bear the dust. One or two of my friends think me a perfect savage for allowing it to stand about as I do. They say it ought to be kept in a glass case."

"It is an exquisite piece of work," said the young man, taking it up; "I have never seen it equalled. Where is the spring, Claudia? In this rose—or this?"

"You almost puzzle me," she replied, taking it from him, and passing her fingers over it. "The carving is so fine, and the spring so well hidden, it is difficult to tell. This was rather a dangerous gift to give me, after all."

"Why?"

"Because—nay, I won't tell you, Frank. You'll think me so weak-minded and silly if I make you a confession."

"I can never think that. I cannot imagine your saying or doing anything that could be called either."

"Well, then, Frank," she replied, earnestly, "you will think me foolish, I know—but such times come now and then in the life of every one, or they must be more than mortal—but sometimes I have felt the presence of that little box a terrible temptation."

"Temptation! To what?"

"To drink the contents of one of those bottles, and 'by a sleep to end the heartache,' &c., &c."

"You, Claudia?"

"Yes, I."

"You, young, happy, and prosperous as you are, with all the world at your feet! What on earth can make you feel like this?"

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness," she replied, sadly. "Ah, Frank, flattered, *feted*, and caressed as I am, the world is still a sad one for me. Many a time I wish myself in the quiet grave beside my mother; and when I think that the contents of one of those phials would give me rest forever, I am tempted—"

She stopped suddenly, with a cry of surprise and alarm, and a frightened look upon her face that made Francis Vavasour feel alarmed.

"Claudia, what is it?" he asked.

"Look here," she said, showing him the casket.

She had pressed her finger unawares on the spring, and the lid flying up, revealed the casket—empty!

Both phials had been removed, and the velvet nest in which they had lain was all that remained to tell of their presence. Claudia's first thought was that Frank had opened it unperceived by her and taken them out. He had not, he assured her—he was as much surprised and concerned as herself—and they set themselves to consider who could have done such a thing, and with what motive.

"I am terrified when I think of it," she said. "It is such a deadly poison—a drug which leaves no trace of its work, I believe—a regular Italian weapon. I tremble to think of the mischief it may do."

"Have none of your people tampered with it, do you think?"

"I do not think it likely."

"You had better ring and inquire if any one has been here lately. When did you open it yourself last?"

"About a fortnight ago, I think, as near as I can recollect. I was dusting it, and I fancied it was beginning to look a little dingy."

"And it was quite right then?"

"Quite."

She rang the bell as she spoke, and Dorothy appeared.

"Dorothy," she said, "some one has opened my casket—the bottles are both gone!"

The surprise and alarm on the woman's face told plainly enough that she knew nothing about it, and she assured her mistress that no one else knew anything about it in the house.

"I don't believe they do," Claudia replied; "it must have been some one who has come in. Has any one ever been in this room, Dorothy, while I have been out?"

"I think not, miss."

"No one, on any business whatever?"

"No, miss. Yet, stay—yes—my Lord Nortonshall was here one day—a very few minutes. He said he was going to write a note, but altered his mind and drove to the theatre instead."

"The very night of his return," was the thought that flashed into Francis Vavasour's mind as he heard the words, and he looked at Claudia to see if it had struck her too. She was deathly pale, and could hardly command her voice to speak to the servant again.

"We must try and find out, Dorothy," she said. "Those bottles are dangerous things to be in ignorant hands. I shall trust you to make what inquiries you can about it without attracting too much attention."

"Very good, miss," and Dorothy left the room.

When the door closed behind her, Claudia went straight up to Frank, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"What is it, Claudia?" he asked. "What do you suspect?"

"I don't know—don't ask me," she replied, in a broken voice. "You can trust me, and I can trust you—our faith in each other is mutual, is it not?"

"Always, dear Cladia. What do you mean?"

"Only this, Frank," she said, and her voice was low and earnest. "Whatever you hear of me in the future, remember that from this hour I have a motive. If I seem to be that man's dearest friend—nay, even if the world sets me down as more than that—remember that my aim is to prevent mischief, and get back those deadly phials untouched."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.)

"OUT OF SWEET SOLITUDE."

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

"It is a fearful stake the poet casts
When he comes forth from his sweet solitude
Of hopes and songs and visionary things,
To ask the iron verdict of the world."

This is the motto selected from the writings of L. E. L., and prefixed to Miss Donnelly's volume of poems, "Out of Sweet Solitude," recently published by J. B. Lippincott & Co.; but many who have admired the poems of the gifted authoress, as they drifted anonymously north and south in the pages of papers and magazines, are of the opinion that she has remained too long in *her* "sweet solitude."

How many "Rachels," both north and south, during the dark days of the war, had the stony grief in their hearts turned to tender tears by the touch of the beautiful poem, "Missing!" Had Miss Donnelly written nothing else, it alone would be sufficient to place her among the first of our American poets. There is nothing sadder, sweeter, more pathetic in our language than this poem. Space will permit us to quote only one stanza—

"A soldier, clad in the zouave dress,
A bright-haired man, with his lips apart,
One hand thrown up o'er his frank, dead face,
And the other clutching his pulseless heart,
Lies there in the shadows cool and dim,
His musket brushed by a trailing bough;
A careless grace in his quiet limbs,
And a wound on his manly brow—
A wound, alas!
Whose dark clots blood the pleasant grass."

The woodland setting to this tender picture of the dead soldier, is truly exquisite—

"The violets peer from their dusky beds
With a tearful dew in their great pure eyes;
The lilies quiver their shining heads,
Their pale lips full of sad surprise."

But the poem must be read as a whole, to be appreciated. Then follow other old favorites, "More Nurses," "The Old Surgeon's Story," &c.

About Miss Donnelly's war poems, there is no straining after effect, no claptrap, no sham sentiment. They are true to nature, and full of that highest form of art which hides art. She does not flourish her palette and brushes—you do not see her *modus operandi*—you only know the picture as it glows on the canvas.

The portion of this volume allotted to "Miscellaneous Poems" is full of gems—in fact, there is not a page in the book unworthy of attentive reading and earnest thought.

"The Sleeper's Sail" is intensely dramatic in execution, but Miss Donnelly's forte—description—is not sacrificed to dramatic effect—

"Mother, I've been on the cliffs out yonder,
Straining my eyes o'er the breakers free,
To the lovely spot where the sun is setting,
Setting and sinking into the sea.

"The sky was full of the fairest colors,
Pink and purple and paley green;
With great soft masses of gray and amber,
And great bright rifts of gold between.

"And all the birds that way were flying,
Heron and curlew overhead,
With a mighty eagle westward floating,
Every plume in their pinions red."

And thus the story flows until the *denouement*, when

"High on the cliffs the lighthouse-keeper
Caught the sound of a piercing scream;
Low in her hut the lonely widow
Moaned in the maze of a troubled dream."

"A Red Letter Day," "In the Vintage," "The young Blanca at my side,
With a sunflush on her braided hair,
And her sleeder fingers, purple-dyed,
Wrought singing softly there."

And the sad, sweet love story that follows—

"I left Blanca at the gate,
And singing, went away."

"The Skeleton at the Feast," "Hic Jacet," are gems of the first water; but "The Poet's Little Rival," in which the poetess touches a lighter and more joyous key, can be read over and over with unceasing delight. Her treatment of the subject reminds us of the poem which celebrates another little daughter—a poem as tender and lovely as this, which we would quote, had we the permission of the author, the editor of this paper.

"Misunderstandings" could have been written only by one who has felt what it is to be misunderstood.

"How like unsightly worms they ceaseless crawl,
Under the pleasant roses of our lives,
Gnawing and gnawing, till the fresh leaves fall,
And nothing green or beautiful survives!

"Ah, it is hard to hold our souls in peace,
To keep our spirits sunny, while these things
Haunt us, like evil birds, and never cease
Making the sunshine dusky with their wings!

"But there is One who understands it all;
The Wounded Heart, that 'neath the olive-trees,
And on the Mount, in bitterness let fall
The secret of Its own vast agonies."

The Sacred Legends are eight in number, among which are "The Bronze Berenice," "Gualberto's Victory," and the well-known "Vision of Monk Gabriel."

We notice with some impatience that critics are continually comparing Miss Donnelly's poems with Longfellow's, as if to write like Longfellow were the greatest felicity to which earthly poet could attain; but Miss Donnelly and Longfellow, though they have at times happened to treat the same subjects, are essentially diverse. Longfellow is a great poet—witness the interludes in the *Aftermath*, if nothing else; and Miss Donnelly is a great poetess—tender, delicate, and feminine in genius. There lies the difference. Longfellow takes the few, quaint words of an old legend, adds, polishes and elaborates; Miss Donnelly takes the same words, and wreathes them about with gossamer fancies until the dry legend resembles an old oak-trunk, hidden in flowery vines. Miss Donnelly is not Longfellow, nor an imitator of that great poet; the work she has done in the work before us entitles her to stand alone in her own individuality.

Space warns us to stop; but we are sure we could go on quoting much longer, without wearing out the patience of our readers or lessening our own admiration.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ An impatient couple were married on a railroad train, in Ohio, recently.

☞ A town in Michigan has its mayor under bonds for habitual drunkenness.

☞ A Minnesota lady is the proud mother of five sons and eighteen daughters.

☞ A crazy woman in Georgia recently mounted a locomotive which was standing unattended and ran it until the steam gave out—fifty-five miles, without accident.

☞ A triple wedding is announced to take place shortly, in which three brothers are to marry three sisters.

☞ A New Jersey justice recently fined his son $10 for stealing, and in default sent him to jail for twenty days.

☞ A Michigan manufacturer has eighteen thousand broom handles for shipment. This ought to set husbands thinking about coming home early.

☞ John Reed, of Lexington, Ky., thinks he owns the oldest horse in the country. The animal is forty-one years old.

☞ Susan Caroline Godsey, known as the Sleeping Beauty, died at the residence of her mother, in Obion county, Tenn., on the 27th of October. She had attained the age of thirty-one years, and, as was alleged, had been in her sleeping condition for about twenty-four years.

☞ The wife of a certain clergyman in New York receives all the marriage fees. She stipulated before her own marriage that this should regularly be done, and uses the money to dress herself and daughter.

☞ Two children died of starvation in New York, lately, their mother having concealed her destitution.

☞ The town clerk of Lancaster, N. H., went gunning lately, and kept four young people in horrid torment two days waiting for their marriage certificates.

☞ A tender-hearted jailor of St. Johnsbury, Vt., took a poor orphan girl who had been arrested into the bosom of his own family, and she showed her gratitude by smashing his watch, stealing his daughter's clothes and running away.

☞ A stranger is said to have recently visited Natick, the home of Vice-President Wilson, and inquired at a house if Mr. Wilson lived there. "What Wilson?" asked a respectable-looking woman who came to the door. "Henry Wilson, Vice-President," was the reply of the stranger. "I don't think he lives about here," returned the intelligent lady; "I never heard of him before." He lived opposite.

☞ Henry Walter, of Mount Joy township, Lancaster county, Pa., hung himself lately, in the woods near his home. He was in the habit of wearing a belt around his waist, which habit his wife disliked; so she hid the belt from him. He then threatened to hang himself; and he did it.

☞ Five hundred dollars reward is offered for information concerning Thomas Armstrong, a wealthy New York merchant, who mysteriously disappeared the day before the recent election. He was to have been married two days after his disappearance, and when last seen, was in his usual health and spirits.

☞ A London paper recently contained the following advertisement: "To Americans and Others—A nobleman and his wife, keeping a most comfortable establishment near town, would *receive two American or English ladies or gentlemen to introduce into the best society*. High references asked. Terms according to requirements. Private sitting-room, carriages, etc. Address Lady ——."

☞ Times of Peril.—In disastrous times of peril the greater the reason for cool heads, presence of mind, steady nerves, calm courage, and the refusal to add any sensational element to inflame excitement. Panic never saves a ship or furnishes an escape from a wreck, when a squall comes or a tempest rages.

☞ A Brooklyn man has been sued for breach of promise by a young damsel in that city, who estimates the damages done to her affections at $20,000. The plea advanced by the defendant is, that he always supposed the young lady was a dressmaker—but when he discovered that making paper-boxes was her profession, the rude shock was too much for his refined sensibilities, and his affection could not stand the strain.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

The Struggle for Existence. A Romance. After the German of Robert Byr. By Agnes Forestier. "To be, or not to be; that is the question."—*Hamlet*. Philada., R. N. McKinney & Co., 16 North Seventh street.

A novel of considerable earnestness and interest, strictly German in the tone of its characters and incidents. Risa and Marianne, the heroines, are both lovable women. Why the story should be called "The Struggle for Existence" will hardly be clear to practical American minds, so we quote, in elucidation, the conclusion of a conversation.

"Where then is the solution?" suddenly exclaimed Valerian. "There must be something higher than the coarse struggle for existence."

"The solution may be given in a few words," replied the old man, with a warmth which contrasted nobly with his former repose. "The struggle for an idea—the attainment of an ideal instead of an actual existence."

His Marriage Vow. By Mrs. Caroline Fairfield Corbin, author of "Rebecca; or, a Woman's Secret," &c. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

The Cumberstone Contest. By the author of "The Best Cheer," &c. Published by Dodd & Mead, New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

What Can She Do? By Rev. E. P. Roe, author of "Barriers Burned Away," &c. Published by Dodd & Mead, New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood. "Completed by the Spirit-Pen of Charles Dickens through a Medium. Embracing also the Earth-life portion of the Work." Published by T. P. James, Brattleboro', Vermont.

A Manual of Etiquette, with Hints on Politeness and Good Breeding. By "Daisy Eyebright." We have not found time yet to read this little work, but we can recommend anything that our sensible contributor, "Daisy Eyebright," has written on the subject of Etiquette, as being excellent authority. The book is prettily gotten up, and the price is only 75 cents. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

The Water Witch; or The Skimmer of the Seas. By J. Fenimore Cooper. Illustrated by Darley. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Philada.

"Sights Afoot," "Mad Monkton," and other stories by Wilkie Collins, author of "The Dead Secret," &c. Published by T. B. Peterson & Bros., Philada.

How to Conduct a Debate. By Frederic Rowton. Published by Dick & Fitzgerald, New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Philada.

Golden Sunbeams. A collection of new music for the Sabbath Schools, &c. By D. T. Hodges and J. H. Tenney. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston; and also for sale by Perkinpine & Higgins, No. 820 Arch street, Philada.

The American Exchange and Review for November, contains "Analogies of Light and Heat," "Love and the Tourney in the Lower Animal World," The Departments of Mining, Railways, Insurance &c. Published N. W. corner of Walnut and Fourth streets, Phil'ada.

Received. The October numbers of the Westminster Review, the British Quarterly, and the American Journal of the Medical Sciences.

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PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, NOV. 29, 1873.

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LETTERS FROM ZIG.

SHOEMAKERS AND OTHER PEOPLE.

Why don't shoemakers ever keep their promises? Lay your hand upon your left breast, and roll up your eyes solemnly, and tell me on your honor as a good Christian, did you ever, in a single instance, know a shoemaker to have a pair of boots finished when he promised? I never did. I don't know what shoemakers were made out of, I'm sure. A shoemaker may be a good citizen, may vote just right every time, may be a husband and the father of a family, with an affectionate disposition and a good, moral character, and his simple word may be as good as gospel, with reference to everything else, but when it comes to the shoemaking business, and finishing off a pair of boots in a given time, a doubled-and-twisted, copper-bottomed oath won't hold him. I was cheated out of a most delightful trip last summer, with a possibility of mountain scenery, buffalo, lost scalps and all the luxuries of the season, just because a certain shoemaker failed to have a certain man's summer boots done by a certain day. Mighty disasters grow out of infinitesimal occasions. Once a gentleman had to postpone his wedding-day because the eternal shoemaker didn't come to time with his married boots, and meantime the lady changed her mind, and the luckless bridegroom, that was to be, but didn't be, remains a soured, disconsolate old bachelor to this day, with nevermore a grain of faith in women or shoemakers. But a woman doesn't begin to be as false and fickle as a shoemaker.

And I have heard of a man who was turned out, of church, and maybe lost his chance of the good place, all through the fault of a pesky shoemaker. You see this Christian man and gentleman had his good boots stolen just on the eve of a journey to transact some important business. There was barely time to have another pair made, the shoemaker gave his solemn word of honor they should be done at a given hour, the gentleman sent for them, and found the boots not yet touched and the shoemaker drunk, and consequently the gentleman missed the train and lost his lawsuit. He was a Christian, but that was too much for even a Christian gentleman. In point of fact, forgetful of his obligations as a Christian, forgetful that the ears of a sinful world were wide open, the gentleman swore aloud, and invoked blue blazes on the head of that pestiferous shoemaker.

And his mother-in-law heard him.

This day that once Christian gentleman is an exile from the true fold, a profane sinner, and a warning to men and shoemakers. He isn't even afraid to swear in the presence of his mother-in-law any more.

I might extend the list indefinitely, but I won't. Goodness knows I could make it as long as the moral law, or as a lady's apologies for being caught with her back hair down, but again I won't. I desist. But what's the reason, I want to know, that all shoemakers are liars? If I wanted to put a fine point upon it, I wouldn't say they were liars, I would say they weren't reliable. But I don't want to put a fine point upon it. I want to call 'em plain liars, and I want some son of waxed-ends and sole leather to give me a reason for the fact. Is there some sneaking, diabolical potency in the smell of leather, which fatally undermines and demoralizes a man's ideas of truth-telling? Hath shoemaker's wax a hidden, subtle essence which paralyzes the arm and plasters up the mouth of every knight of the end, last and awl, so that he cannot aid people in their extremities, nor yet tell the truth? Answer, O Shade of St. Crispin! I count it so much valuable information gained, the day some saint or sinner shall tell me why a shoemaker never, never, never, yet finished a pair of boots when he said he would. And I don't wish 'em any harm, but I hope that in the place to which the shoemakers will go in the next world—be the same hot or cold—they will all be compelled to trot barefoot till every one of 'em makes a pair of shoes on time.

The battle of Waterloo was lost to France because a man failed to keep his promise. Many a woman is a forlorn old maid this day, because men have failed to keep their promises. And many an old bachelor walks the earth forlorn in buttonless shirts and ragged stockings, and refuses to be comforted, because of having a fall from leaning upon the broken reed of a woman's word. Many a ruined man tears his hair and slashes frantically about because his debtors have broken their promise to pay. Many a tailor curses many a dandy daily because of broken promises to come and settle. Broken promises are as uncomfortable to walk over as bits of broken glass in journeying through this world.

Many a boy has gone to ruin because his mother never gave him the thrashings she promised him when he was little. Once there was a wicked little boy who went bathing in the river after his mother had told him that if he ever went into the water before he learned to swim, she would skin him alive and take his head off. She didn't do it. Mark now the after career of that naughty little boy whose mother didn't keep her promise to him. When he found his mother didn't skin him alive, he went in bathing again and again, and every time his mother didn't skin him alive. When he reached mature years, instead of being an honest man, he became a lawyer, and his mother went down into her grave early of a broken heart. It was well she died early, while her cup of misery was not yet full. It was well she went to Heaven before the full measure of her son's wickedness was emptied on her head. Because awhile after she was dead her son went to Congress and voted himself a salary grab, and became a Christian statesman. And finally, after he had kept on being a Christian statesman until he had been made a bank president, and the bank failed, and he and his family had to go to Europe for their health, he topped off his mountain of scandalous iniquity by going and being a newspaper editor. Now he wouldn't have done a single one of these wicked things if his mother had kept her promise and skinned him alive when he was little.

There are people in this world who I honestly believe would break their word if they promised to attend their own funeral. Life hasn't a charm for them unless they can break a new promise every day. They promise to meet you on business at a certain place and a certain hour, and have no more regard for their solemnly-spoken word than so many monkeys. They vow by all that is sacred that they will do this or that thing without fail, you depend on them, and behold! you find they haven't done it at all, and never meant to try to keep their promise when they made it. Strangest of all, it never occurs to them that they are liars, and liars that cause more trouble in the world than any other sort of liars. For the most vicious, pestiferous trash in the human family are the chronic promise-breakers.

Man is the only animal capable of making a promise. A monkey can chatter, a dog can howl, and a donkey can sing, but they can't any or all of them make a promise. That is reserved for man alone. It is reserved for man alone to be a person of much promise. But I don't like people of much promise. It is too apt to be all promise with them.

The good old Quaker way is the best. A real wise, old-fashioned Quaker will hardly ever make a square-out promise to anybody. He nearly always puts in some kind of proviso—"If the Lord permit, and the Friends see fit," or something of that sort. And a real old-fashioned Quaker never breaks his word, when once he has made a promise. I say the Quaker way is the best. A human word ought to be wholly sacred. The true man shows both his honesty and his gentlemanhood by keeping his promises with his wife. Indeed, so sacredly and inviolably ought a promise to be kept, after we once make it, that it seems to me we oughtn't to make a promise for certain very often. Considering all the accidents of human life, it really seems best not.

Don't make a promise if you can help it. But if you do make it; keep it, or die trying to. Let men know that your word is as good as gold. ZIG.

The Simple Secret.

Twenty clerks in a store, twenty hands in a printing-office, twenty apprentices in a ship-yard, twenty young men in a village—all want to get on in the world, and expect to do so. One of the clerks will become a partner, and make a fortune; one of the compositors will own a newspaper, and become an influential citizen; one of the apprentices will become a master-builder; one of the young villagers will get a handsome farm, and live like a patriarch—but which one is the lucky individual? Lucky!

There is no luck about it. The thing is almost as certain as the rule of three. The young fellow who distances his competitors is he who masters his business, who preserves his integrity, who lives cleanly and purely, who devotes his leisure time to the acquisition of knowledge, who saves his spare money. There are some ways to fortune shorter than the old dusty highway; but the staunch men of the community, the men who achieve something really worth having, good fortune, good name, and serene old age, all go in this road.

IN THE SUNSHINE.

The peach hangs heavy on the garden wall,
See, love, see!
The peach hangs heavy on the garden wall,
'Tis ripe, rose-tinted, and ready to fall;
Fruit meet for thee and me.
'Tis ripe as ripe can be.
May we not pluck it from the garden wall?

The sweet birds warble near the garden wall,
Hush, love, hush!
The sweet birds warble near the garden wall;
With melody their mates they softly call;
Each woos unto his nest
The one that each loves best;
Warbling so sweetly by the garden wall.

Warm lips are wailing by the garden wall,
Yes, love, yes!
Warm lips are wailing by the garden wall;
They wait love's kisses, and they claim love's all.
If thy heart's love be mine,
As my heart's love is thine,
May we not tell it by the garden wall?

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

DEAR POST:—It is a great misfortune to a woman when she is so constituted by nature that her ideas run down through her fingers instead of off the end of her tongue. I was made that way, and I have regretted it all my life, but never so keenly as within the last year or two, since it has become so fashionable for ladies to lecture. "It always has been fashionable for ladies to lecture—their husbands," growls an unsympathetic masculine at my elbow.

The interruption has "put me out." The lectures I referred to were not of the private, curtain order, at all. I was thinking how inexpressibly delightful it must be to have "engagements," and get up cold frosty mornings to catch the 5.40 train, the only one that will land you in the distant city at the proper hour. Suppose you don't have time to button your boots or arrange your *coiffure*—it is something to know that a vast audience is awaiting your coming—and looking forward to an evening of amusement and instruction. And then to see your name posted all over the streets, all along with tar soap, and the grand circus, and "S. T. 1860. X," contaur liniment and all the rest of it. It must be immensely gratifying to the female mind that soars above the groveling things of earth. Gives a woman the idea she is somebody—and why shouldn't it?

(The conundrum will keep.)

But the crowning glory and satisfaction comes in when with eyes modestly downcast she steps upon the platform, and amid a storm of applause bows timidly as the great "Light" of the town presents her.

They would not imagine—that vast concourse of people—that the fair, stately lady who seems so much at her ease, so perfectly self-possessed, as she spreads out her notes and prepares to commence, was in an inward flutter of excitement over the set of her new velvet polonaise, and wondering if the white rose in her ebon tresses was quite as becoming as a pink feather would have been.

But she is, and she doesn't get so interested or carried away with her subject as to forget to be a little bit worried about it all the evening.

I always envy women that can talk. Silence, it has been stated, is looked upon as an indication of great wisdom, and maybe it is; but it don't take well with the public, and a man or woman who sits "mum" all the evening, can't feel the gratification that one does who is conscious of having been the life and amusement of the company. I've seen fools rush in and do that very thing, and have had a good deal more respect for them than I had for the angels who feared to open their lips; and so did everybody else. Of course it was not fair, but we like noise and confusion, all of us, and are quite willing to take people at their own valuation. I know a little woman who can write an admirable lecture, but who couldn't get up courage to read it to her own husband without having the gas turned low so that he couldn't see her blushes. And I know another female who never wrote anything in her life, not even an excuse for her boy to take to his teacher, and, if an original idea should get into her brain, it would shatter it all to pieces. And yet that woman has the confidence of a railroad official, and can get up before a crowded house, and deliver a lecture in the most engaging manner, and pass herself off for a remarkable being, and have an admiring multitude even at her heels; while the little woman who wrote the lecture, hides her sweetness in the nursery, and wishes Tom would come home as the baby seems cronpy.

It is very sweet and pious and pretty on the part of the little woman, but she is not half as happy or as satisfied with herself as the female who has confidence and can talk, and that is why I say it is a misfortune for people to be born with ideas, and not the faculty of distributing them in the natural way.

"Those little mask veils are too pretty for anything, and immensely becoming to *me*."

This highly intellectual remark issues from the rosy lips of a pretty niece who promised positively not to interrupt me, if I would allow her to sit near me.

I thank her heartily for the observation however, as I was quite forgetting that my mission was to write *facts*, and not fancies.

She refers, I presume, to those little trifles of white lace with the black dots. She is right. They are "too pretty for anything," and are becoming to almost any type of beauty, and the prejudice that last year attached to them has gradually died out. Ladies of quiet tastes would not wear them at first, but they are used so extensively now that one forgets their former "rapid" look, which was, after all, only an idea. The more dressy of these veils are three-cornered and trimmed with deep silk fringes of black and white. The little veils of dotted net, with long scarf ends floating backward, have been discarded, as have also the gray gauze square veils, that were "after the Spanish," and so suggestive of a dilapidated hat that must needs be entirely covered to hide its deficiencies. The veil of the period, and which for ugliness cannot be equalled, is a square of black net with a string to draw around the face. It is worn by those who never miss a fashion, and who never have an idea they are not irresistible so long as they are conscious of sporting the "latest agony."

There is a rumor that the little veils with scarf ends will be again fashionable, and as they are by far the most graceful article in that line we have had, we may as well be prepared to give them a warm and hearty reception—and as the first step purchase one of those exquisite gold veil pins that have just made their appearance, and are so much more civilized and peaceful than the oxydized dirks and arrows that have fought their way into public favor.

In regard to redingotes the female mind is a good deal agitated just now. It cannot find anything that exactly suits. And to come right down to plain butter and turnips, and without the fear of furnishing-houses before my eyes, I must affirm that there is nothing either graceful or becoming in those long-pointed, double-breasted, big-buttoned, big-pocketed garments, that are exhibited as the very latest, from a design by Worth.

Worth may make the man, but he don't make the woman look as well as she ought to this season. I hear of very many who have folded up their costly materials, and silently, with a few secret tears, put them away until fashion or Providence or some ruling power shall send a style that can be conscientiously adopted. The idea of drawing all the fulness of the skirts back, and by strings and pulleys and other mechanical contrivances, forcing them to stay there, is not enthusiastically received. Some of the radical adopted it, and one lady I heard of carried the fashion to such an extreme that when ready for the promenade she found she could not walk a step, and was compelled to loosen things before venturing out.

There are a few other matters I would like to speak of, but I find myself at the end of my column, and will have to defer it until another time. So with just one word more I will close. If you haven't a ruff get one. You can't get along without, and there is no sense in trying. If you are tall and slender and have a long neck it will be becoming to you, if you are the reverse it will make you look a fright, but no matter, get it all the same.

OLIVE KING.

HER PICTURE.

BY GLEN CAROL.

Somebody sat for a picture the other day—the dress liked best was worn, its soft, black folds, relieved only by the bright-tinted silken tie, knotted at the throat, below a wave of foamy lace; the small, small hands, with no ornament, save one shining, golden band, lay idly clasped upon her lap; the eyes tried hard to smile, and the lips, too, wear a careless, laughing look, but somehow, when the picture was finished, the sun, as if disdaining the deceit, had left upon the smooth paper the imprint of a very sorrowful face.

The eyes that had tried to prison a smile within their depths, held, instead, the shadow of a woe, full, terrible—and dumb. The old, eager, wistful look told of a heart bitterly defranded, of a life-time's grief crowded into a few, short years, so short, yet oh! how long! And the mouth that had thought never to betray a painful secret, unconsciously revealed it.

No happy face e'er wore a look like that! Ah! traitor Sun, why should'st thou betray the trust reposed in thee? Why tear aside the filmy veil beneath whose folds self sought to hide—why portray the inner life, when thou should'st have dealt but with the mask that walks the world?

Little wonder that the tell-tale shadow was bidden away under lock and key, with sharp refusal of another sitting. Someday, when years have come and gone, other hands may lift from out its resting-place the painted semblance of the face that wears, perchance, once more within a stormless clime, the lost happiness, the graces of its spring-time!

Some day hot tears may fall for one whose tears are dried, and the haunting face prove a talisman that shall never outlast its charm!

How to Draw a Crowd.

Managers of modern agricultural fairs are beginning to put in practice new devices for attracting visitors to their shows and money to their coffers. This time some of them have made an especial demonstration on the women, those in particular who have pattern babies. The maiden portion of the sex has been somewhat overlooked in the premium list, but their turn will doubtless come in some shape hereafter. At a recent fair at Manchester, N. H., there was a side-show of babies, which proved immensely popular. A premium of a fine gold necklace was given to Mrs. Stevens for a boy under six months old. Mrs. Hazeltine received a gold cup for the best girl under twelve months. Mrs. Norris having the best boy under twenty months, secured a gold medal. The baby with the reddest hair was presented by Mrs. Gerald, for which fiery demonstration the committee gave her a ten-dollar gold piece, and hoped she would bring the same baby next year. The rush to see this little premium red-head was quite a feature of the show. Twin girls of Mrs. Clement received a pair of gold mugs as an encouragement to do better next time. Mrs. Bacon, who showed a cradle containing triplets, received three gold medals. The whole show was so great a success that next year the baby crowd is expected to be tremendous, in addition to which the committee has doubled the premiums, and offered a medal to every child at the fair. With these strong attractions the managers rely on an immense increase in the number of pumpkins, pigs, and babies. Probably even a gander pulling would not be half as successful in drawing a crowd.

Carelessness in Addressing Letters.

Complaints have been frequently made of the non-delivery of letters in proper time after mailing, when the fact of the matter really is that senders of letters, especially American letter-writers, are notoriously careless in giving the proper superscriptions to their epistles. In England the people have been drilled by the postal regulations and constant admonition of the press, to be careful in giving full directions on envelopes, hence very few, if any, mistakes occur in the post-offices. A few days ago a sealed package was received by the postmaster at New York from Savannah, having on the upper corner of the envelope the usual request to return the same if not delivered in so many days. The package was directed to "Samuel J. Smith, New York." A merchant of that name had the letter delivered to him, when on opening it the fact was revealed that the contents, consisting of drafts for a large amount, were intended for a gentleman of that name in Baltimore. No doubt the postmasters of Savannah and Baltimore were roundly abused for the tardy delivery of this letter, when, in reality, the fault lay entirely with the sender. Hundreds of such instances are of daily occurrence at the New York post-office, as well as in other cities.

A Centennial Woman.

Miss Lucy Langdon Nowell was born in Alfred, Maine, July 4th, 1776, on the day and very near the hour of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. When eight years of age she united with the Alfred Shakers, and has since lived with them. When eighty-four years of age she wove thirty-four yards of cloth, and at ninety-six knit ten pairs of mittens. She has never been in a railroad car, and is in excellent health. If she lives until 1876 a Pullman palace car will be dispatched to her native town to transport her to Boston. From thence she will be carried direct to the Quaker City, where her presence will be one of the features of the grand Centennial.

HALLOWE'EN.

BY ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

All Saints' Eve! And by the cross-stones of the
dully growing brook,
Swelling with the rains of autumn, is a nutbough-
covered nook,
Katie listens to the twilight—foolish heart!—that
she may hear
The footstep of a lover who is growling far too dear.

For she thinks—so says the legend—on the night
of Hallowe'en,
That the man to be her husband will by her bright
eyes be seen,
If she eats a mellow apple, o'er her shoulder throws
a look,
And waits for his forthcoming by the cross stones
of the brook.

And she knows that black-eyed Robin passes nightly
by this way—
Ah, were he to ask the question, Kate would never
say him nay!
Foolish, foolish little maiden, e'er to dream that, if
she wait
By the brookside in the twilight, she can mould the
will of Fate

To her own long-dreamed-of wishes! No, girl,
that may never be!
It is not thus by vain longings we can shape our
destiny;
Fortune's smiles are far too fickle—they are never
to be bought,
Though the wish with youths and maidens is the
father to the thought.

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—They have had a most unfortunate controversy over in Camden. Mr. Bangs asserted that Noah's ark was one thousand feet long. Mr. Mullet contended that it was but five hundred feet in length, and in his effort to induce Bangs to throw off a few hundred feet from his estimate, Mullet explained the matter, and reasoned with him, and presented the subject in different lights, and held Bangs down and bit off a morsel of his nose, and bumped his head against a fire-plug. We do not wish to appear too stern a moralist, but it seems to us that the method of conducting the discussion was partially wrong. There was no really urgent necessity for settling the question on the spot. About four thousand years have elapsed since Noah navigated the ark, and it is likely that if Bangs had waited an hour or two longer before determining its length the delay would not have started a popular panic or an earthquake, nor would it have thrown the nations of the world into a condition of convulsive excitement. It would have been much wiser, therefore, for Bangs and Mullet either to have hunted up somebody who saw the ark and measured it with a foot rule, or to have procured a reliable Sunday-school book containing a picture of the ark and to have made an estimate from that engraving. It was absurd to expect to arrive at the truth by butting the head of Mr. Bangs against a fire-plug, apart from the grave wickedness of the act itself; apart, we say, from the scandalous iniquity of battering up such valuable public property as a fire-plug, with such a dense and destructive implement as Mr. Bangs's head.

—This seems to be a peculiarly appropriate time to call the attention of financiers to the fact that we are in immediate want of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It is a matter of total indifference to us whether we get it in gold or in greenbacks. One of the most remarkable peculiarities of our nature is that we are easily pleased. We have always advocated the theory of expansion, and we are ready now to expand as soon as some one gives us the money. The opportunity is a particularly favorable one for capitalists who desire to have their wealth properly expended, and, as it may not occur again, monied men will perceive the importance of coming forward with the cash at once. At the same time we would discourage too general a response to this appeal. Nobody need offer us three hundred thousand dollars. We have decided to accept only two hundred and fifty thousand, and we will take no more, even if Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. Astor come to us with tears in their eyes and beseech us to. We are inflexible on this point. The purpose to which we will devote the money concerns us alone, but to satisfy the inquisitive we may go so far as to say that the great financial scheme which we propose does not contemplate the construction of a new railroad, but it remotely involves a plan which we have adopted for securing a new set of shirts, which by an ingenious and beautiful arrangement will open in the back. Persons who desire to supply the requisite funds are requested to send sample greenbacks by letter, or to call with the money in their pockets. We will take the money of a colored person as readily as that of a white man. We scorn distinctions of race in such matters as this.

—A number of very worthy people deluded themselves with the belief that the world would come to an end on the 5th of November of this year. Perhaps it is not necessary to state that they were disappointed, but we will mention the fact in case any of our readers may accidentally have overlooked it. Our neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Grillparza, were among these second adventists, and on the morning of the 5th, they fixed themselves up in muslin robes and proceeded to ascend to the roof of the wood-house, so that they could fly upward without meeting with any obstacle. After Grillparza had reached the roof, he looked down and saw Mrs. Grillparza coming out of the house with an umbrella, a carpet-bag and her gum-shoes. She also had her false teeth wrapped up in a piece of paper. Mr. Grillparza remonstrated with her upon the absurdity of taking an umbrella with her into the next world, and commented with much severity upon her frivolity and wickedness in thinking about her false teeth and gum-shoes at such a solemn time. But Mrs. Grillparza said that she wasn't goin' to risk getting rheumatism just for the sake of appearances, and that if she found she didn't want her teeth where she was goin', she could give 'em to the poor. Grillparza angrily told her that nobody would want such things there. But she insisted upon taking them along. Then Grillparza told her that he wouldn't let her come up the ladder unless she threw away that umbrella and her teeth. Mrs. Grillparza then became angry, and with very proper spirit she shook her umbrella at Grillparza, and told him that if he would come down she would pound some sense into him. But Grillparza would not come down, so Mrs. Grillparza took the ladder away, and went into the house—mad. Grillparza spent all that day and the succeeding night on the wood-shed, and finally slid down the water-spout at the risk of his life, and sought his wife. We were not present at the battle, but we should judge from the subsequent condition of Grillparza's nose, that his wife won in about two rounds.

—The last poet that has turned up, we are not so certain about. His book, just published in this city, contains a poem entitled "Perfumes," in which the following appears:

"Benzoin brings fumes of mordant must,
Wild, tempting vapors seethe!
Houris' flushed faces craze the gust;
Their breaths are hot to breathe.
Supple-formed ghouls robust,
Lascive, hard-bathed, bequeathed—
Vague, fleshy scents with trust,
Sword-tongues, imperious of thrust!"

The principal impression which these stirring lines make is, that the poet is in serious trouble of some kind, and that he is, so to speak, knocked off of his intellectual pins by his anguish. But at the same time it is surprising how clearly he expresses the sentiment which he has in view. The idea seems to be that if Benzoin will bring fumes which will seethe houris so that they craze the gust, vague fleshy scents with trust will naturally imperiously thrust sword-tongues. There can be no doubt that this is true; and we have always observed that when supple-formed ghouls are hard-bathed they become robust. But why does the poet, even in his misery, omit to mention that hunch-backed goblins become depolarized by sublimated immersion in isothermal soap? and why, oh why, does he neglect to point with the finger of scorn to the familiar circumstance that vague, immutable mush-heads are cephalitical phantasmagoria when they are macerated in crucibles of organoscopy? Both of these facts are important, and both of them are as full of poetry as those referred to. The world will never be perfectly happy until the poet strikes his lyre and produces a few such wildwood notes as these; and it will never know what real poetry is. We beg the author to stick to poetry. He will involve the universe in gloom if he ever comes out as a manufacturer of conundrums.

—A man who plays practical jokes upon his wife deserves to be punished, and Slatterly, of Muncy, *was* punished. His wife has a dread of cats, and before retiring at night she always looks carefully under the bed to see that no stray puss and no man, on robbery intent, are concealed there. A few nights ago, after Mr. and Mrs. Slatterly had retired, Slatterly, who has been learning ventriloquism, thought he would amuse himself and scare his wife by gently yowling and making the sound come from under the bed. Mrs. Slatterly instantly sat up and exclaimed:

"Josiah, I do believe there is a cat in this room."

"Oh, nonsense," grunted Slatterly; and then he made the noise again.

"I tell you, Josiah," exclaimed Mrs. S., "I hear a cat under this bed. I wish you'd get out and drive it away."

"Oh, go to sleep, Matilda," said Slatterly, "I don't hear anything. There's no cat about."

Then Josiah, with his mouth beneath the covers, uttered a louder screech than before.

"Well, if you won't clear that cat out, you brute, I will," said Mrs. Slatterly.

So she reached over, picked up Josiah's boots, and put them on in bed in order to protect her feet and ankles from the infuriated animal. Then she took Slatterly's cane and stooped down to sweep it around beneath the bed. Just as she did so, Josiah emitted a fearful yell which might have come from a cat in the last paroxysms of hydrophobia. This startled Mrs. Slatterly so that she sprang backward, and in doing so she stumbled against the baby's cradle, which was overturned, and she went head foremost against the twenty-five dollar looking-glass on the bureau, while the cane flew out of her hand and lighted with considerable force on Slatterly's head. The screams of Mrs. Slatterly aroused all the neighborhood and even brought out the fire department, so that by the time the baby was rescued from the wreck and the broken glass picked up, two engines had streams playing upon the house, and the front door had been burst open by the police; and the firemen were engaged in dragging a wet hose over the entry carpet and up the front stairs just as Slatterly came down to explain things. That feline ventriloquism cost him just ninety dollars for carpets and looking-glasses, and a contusion on the head which the people of Muncy to this hour believe he received in a pugilistic encounter with his wife.

—We learn from an exchange that "a lady in Farmfield, Maine, was badly injured the other day by the explosion of a bottle of stewed tomatoes." We give this item because we feel that if the fact is discovered that tomatoes will explode, our readers ought to know it. These new scientific discoveries are always interesting. We had no idea that tomatoes possessed this property. The most disagreeable incident connected with the vegetable with which we are familiar was that which happened to old Merriweather last summer. He had been at the Montgomery County Fair, where he bought a prize tomato to take home for seed. He put it into his coat-tail pocket and forgot about it, and he did not wear that coat again until he went to church on Sunday. While he was taking up the collection he felt as if he must sneeze, and he put his hand into the tomato pocket to get his handkerchief. A look of pain and amazement mingled upon his countenance with the preliminary contortions of the sneeze. But the sneeze would come, and in his confusion he dropped the money-box, jerked his hand out of his pocket, and, in endeavoring to support himself, placed that claw, covered all over with mashed tomato, upon the shoulder of old Mrs. Stiles who sat at the head of the adjoining pew. As soon as she perceived the mess upon her new dress, she rose and forgetting the sacredness of the place banged Merriweather's head with her umbrella, upon which he precipitately fled from the church, and went home without his hat. If that tomato had exploded and driven Merriweather up through the roof he would have preferred it to the mortification of this occurrence, and to his encounter with Mrs. Stiles. Perhaps he didn't sit down on it hard enough.

—My neighbor Chubb is very anxious for his friend Turnbull to come home. Chubb's cellar has been swarming with rats, and Chubb tried to borrow a dog somewhere to destroy the vermin. As Turnbull was about going out to Cincinnati for a week or two on business, he thought it would be a good thing to send his dog around to Chubb's to stay until he returned. So he brought the animal, an enormous terrier, placed him in the cellar and left. Since that time no member of the Chubb family has entered the cellar excepting Chubb himself, who went down once to see how many rats had been killed, and came up with a mouthful of meat less in his right leg than he originally had. And now as soon as anybody opens the cellar door, Turnbull's dog flies into a rage and threatens to chew the offender up. It is supposed that the animal is living high on the provisions down there, but as no fire can be made in the furnaces, the Chubbs are gradually freezing to death, and if Turnbull stays away much longer the family will be in their graves. No man will know how much vigor there is in the English language until he hears Chubb criticizing that terrier dog. Chubb throws feeling and earnestness into his remarks upon the subject.

WHISPERINGS OF LOVE.

BY FRANK H. WADE.

Dark-brown eyes looked into mine,
Eyes that flowed like brightest wine,
In their light I saw the sign
Of Love.

Dark curls flowed o'er shoulders white,
'Mongst them Cupid romped that night,
Made them wave, the artful wight,
With Love.

Little hands were clasped in mine,
A soft voice whispered, "I am thine,"
From ruby lips I drank the wine
Of Love.

JESSIE DALE,

The Conductor's Daughter;

OR,

The Plot Against the Pennsylvania Railroad.

BY BURR THORNBURY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "ST. LEGER'S LOVE," "RAVENSWOOD," "SKALE, THE SCOUT," "AGNES AYRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

The dead body of the stranger—for he was such to all, and even if he had not been, his features were so frightfully mutilated that he could have been recognized only by his dress, person or some other signs—was conveyed to a neighboring hotel, which for the time being was converted into a hospital. There it was placed in a room adjoining that in which Harry Lester received attention. This latter by a little manœuvring Cecil Parnell secured entirely to himself and the sufferer. It communicated directly with the other, which was in the rear, and had no occupant but that of the dead body of the young stranger.

Though space was needed for the accommodation of others, Cecil had begged that this double apartment might be yielded to his exclusive use, and a liberal bribe of greenbacks had its effect.

"If it is possible to remove my living friend," he said to the physician and the hotel proprietor, "I wish to resume my journey before morning. Do you think, doctor, that he can be taken in safety as far as New York?"

"I look for his return to partial consciousness very soon," was the reply. "Removing him a short distance can do no harm. He may fully recover by the time you wish to start. He could be placed on a train in his present condition if the movement were imperative, but I advise keeping him quiet awhile yet."

"I *must* reach New York by morning," declared Cecil, "and it is necessary that my friend accompany me. There will be a train, will there not?"

This question was addressed to the hotel-keeper.

"The bridge cannot be repaired for some days," he answered, "but there will be but little interruption of travel. The express from M —— will back down, it is already announced, and leave here at midnight."

"By that line, then, I must prepare myself to reach the city. You will see that the remains of my friend are properly cared for, I presume, and they will be removed to-morrow. Take this to meet expenses."

He handed him several bills of the denomination of ten and twenty, which the landlord took rather reluctantly, thinking that one so liberal would be sure to pay abundantly, even if the debt were left later to be cancelled.

"I will give you the name of my dead friend, so that it can go into the papers. But please do not answer any inquiries that may be made by telegraph. The truth will be known soon enough."

Thereupon Cecil wrote upon a card the name of *Harry Lester*, and gave it to the landlord as that of the young man lying dead in the other room.

Then the landlord and the physician went out, Cecil's parting request to the former being that he be called at 11 P.M., but not disturbed before, unless there was an imperative necessity therefor. If he desired anything for himself he would ring.

After the departure of the two men, Cecil's first care was to see that the windows of both rooms were made secure against outside observation. Then he locked the door of the front apartment. Next he approached the bed on which lay the form of Harry Lester. Harry's clothing had all been removed, with the exception of his undergarments, and even these Cecil soon secured.

His intention was, as the reader has of course foreseen, to pass the body of the stranger off as that of the millionaire's son. Not hesitating to undertake his unpleasant, not to say sacrilegious task, he soon effected a complete transfer of the apparel of the living to the person of the dead. Even a costly ring from Harry's helpless hand was placed upon the other's. The miniature of Jessie Dale was the only article not included in the exchange, and this Cecil kept himself, fairly chuckling with joy at having thus obtained the picture of the girl he loved. He pressed it passionately to his lips, and then resumed his almost accomplished work.

The two young men—Harry and the stranger—were in figure, in the color of their hair, and general appearance, the almost exact counterparts of each other. Their dress was unlike, but as it was in the case of each discolored with blood, no one would be apt to remember that there had been a contrast in that.

Cecil was playing a daring game, however, but he had little fear of the consequences.

He had now an hour to spare before the train would be down. Suddenly it occurred to him that as the garments he had taken from the dead stranger were blood-stained, it would not do for him to compel Harry to wear them. As one suit of clothing would do as well as another to disguise the latter, he called the landlord, and asked if it were not possible to obtain a fresh suit. He was willing to pay liberally for them.

The unsuspicious and accommodating landlord thought that apparel suitable for temporary wear could be procured of one of his lodgers, and commissioned to purchase such, he went out, and ere long returned with the desired articles.

He then assisted Cecil in putting them on the still unconscious Harry. The plotter's next anxiety was to get rid of the stranger's clothes, for if left behind, they might lead to the detection of the trick.

The landlord again went out, and Cecil, rolling the garments into as compact a mass as possible, raised the window and threw them out into the river, on the very brink of which, as he remembered he had observed when he had first looked out, the hotel was situated. He heard the dull splash in the water, saw by the glare of the lamps burning above that the bundle was floating away, and then turned with increased satisfaction to see what was to be done next.

Cecil was now in his element. Anything as preposterously bold as his present undertaking he delighted in—until he wearied of it; then his love of languor and the *dolce far niente* would return. But there was not much prospect of his native indolence overcoming him for awhile yet.

At fifteen minutes of eleven the expected express backed down to receive its passengers. The physician who had attended Harry Lester still gave it as his opinion that the young man could with safety be removed if it were absolutely necessary, but advised delay. But the success of Cecil's plot depended upon an immediate departure from the place, and he declared anew that he must go and that his friend should go with him.

A sleeping-car was attached to the train, and to this Harry was accordingly carefully conveyed and made very comfortable therein. Cecil said he would step to the telegraph office and send a message requesting a friend to be on hand to receive them, which he did. Then he placed himself on board the train and it started.

And that was the last the Riverside Hotel, its proprietor, or any one else abiding there ever heard of Cecil Parnell.

He never came back for the body of his dead friend.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEWS OF THE DISASTER.

"Frightful railroad catastrophe! An entire train precipitated into a river! Many passengers killed and wounded, others drowned! A scene of horror, confusion and destruction!"

Similar to this were the announcements that headed the accounts of the disaster in the papers the next morning.

Those who knew or supposed that friends or relatives of theirs had taken passage in the doomed train, perused with a sickening fear of finding what they sought, the names of the victims as given in the public Journals.

Ellis Lester, opening his favorite paper for a glance at it before breakfast, was horrified to read the news of the catastrophe.

"The 5 P. M. train for New York from Camden!" he gasped, his fine face paling as if death-struck. "Why, Harry took that train! Merciful Heavens! if he should be one of the victims!"

He saw further down the column a list of the killed, wounded and missing, but he feared to read. His wife at that moment entered the parlor.

"What is it, Ellis?" she inquired, noticing his agitation.

He motioned toward the paper, but instantly withdrew it from her as if unwilling that her eye should first catch what might be there.

"A dreadful railroad accident last night," he aspirated, his tones husky with apprehension.

"And to the train Harry took?" asked Mrs. Lester, wildly, instinctively guessing the truth.

"Yes," assented her husband.

"And is he killed? Oh, Ellis, is Harry killed? I see by your looks that—that—oh, is his name there?" she faltered.

"I have not seen it," returned Mr. Lester, distressedly; "I fear to read the list."

"Give me the paper," said the mother, determinedly, but with a face death-white.

"No, no; I must search that long list of names. Ah!" he groaned, for his eye had already caught among the names headed, "killed," that of his son.

The paper dropped from his hand.

"Harry's name is there!" wailed Mrs. Lester. "Oh, our boy is dead!"

"Dear wife," began her husband, but he could not proceed. An agony rent his bosom and trembled in his voice. The strong man became as a stricken child.

Mrs. Lester, as if to assure herself of the dreadful truth, caught the paper from the floor, and ran her eyes over it until upon her distracted sight blazed the same unalterable, cruel announcement—Killed, Harry Lester. A moan of anguish issued from her ashen lips and she sank senseless on the carpet. The spectacle of his wife's overwhelming grief aroused Mr. Lester from his own weakness. He called a servant, had the wretched mother conveyed to her chamber, and applying the usual restoratives, awaited her return from the merciful insensibility that for a brief period kept her from her grief.

The news soon spread through the house that young Mr. Lester had been killed on the rail, that Mrs. Lester had fainted, and that a physician had been sent for. It was a sad household indeed, for Harry was liked by all the servants, and every one thoroughly sympathized with the stricken parents.

"An' indade," wailed a fresh-faced Bridget who had not been long in the service of the Lesters, but whose attachment to the whole family had been ardent from the first, "indade, an' I could hev told thim that he would be kilt at last—a ridin' ivery day on thim murtherin' stame-ingines, which I'll niver get aboard of agin mesilf. The saints receive ye, Misther Harry; but ye were a swate and gintle gintleman, an' the likes of ye I had niver seen in this counthry before. Mushullah! but it's too bad to be takin' ye off from us all so suddint. An' how did it happen?" she inquired abruptly, her curiosity to know the particulars of Harry's fate rising above her grief.

One of the servants was already reading aloud the account of the disaster.

"An' they wint down into the river!" ejaculated the horror-stricken domestic, crossing herself piously. "Hiven save us, but it's worse than bein' at say! To think of a loky-moky a-lapein' into the wather, an' pullin' the rist of thim afther him! It's what they likes to do, thim loky-mokys, an' I wouldn't trust 'em at all, at all, no more. The scrame of their black throats shows what their nature is. Och! but I thought the divil had me shure whin first I heard thim hoot an' found that one of thim had started with us at his hales! And every one we passed would scrame at us in the same bloody manner, jist to add to me fright, I know. Why will min dhrive such bastes? Ah, but I remember how glad I was to get to the groond again and I'll niver put me foot aboard one of thim thrains again, nor I wouldn't *that* time, only that they tould me there was no danger. No danger indade! There's nothing but danger, an' it's a wunder that iverybody that rides in that bathon way is not kilt like poor Misther Harry."

Bridget's circumlocution having brought her back to the starting-point, she gave way to fresh demonstrations of grief, not unmingled with indignation that such a method of travelling as by rail should be permitted.

As soon as Mrs. Lester recovered from her swoon, though the force of her grief still rendered her almost distracted, her husband bade her a sorrowful adieu and immediately set off for the scene of the disaster, with the melancholy object of ascertaining the particulars of his son's supposed death, and to recover his remains.

What discoveries, consolatory or otherwise, he made upon arriving at his destination, we will not relate until we visit another household—that of Conductor Dale—into which an awful gloom had also been brought because of the heartless and villainous deception practised by Cecil Parnell.

The morning paper had been received at Mr. Dale's, and Jessie, as she often did, took a hasty survey of the news columns before conveying it to her father. Her quick eye caught the startling heading so prominently placed there.

"Another railroad disaster," sighed Jessie. "Oh, dear, and so many killed! How terrible! I always think of father when I read of such things. Every day he has to go, and though neither he nor a single one of his trains ever met with a serious accident, I do not know how soon—dreadful! dreadful!" she exclaimed, as even while her thoughts ran in the channel indicated, her eyes followed the printed lines. "The entire train precipitated into the river! Oh, what miserable bridges they do build! I wish *I* were president or manager or superintendent or something; I'd have things right on *my* road, I'll warrant. It is terrible to be pitched into the water to perish. Not less than thirty passengers drowned! And here is a list of names. Of course *I* don't know any of them."

Jessie had entirely forgotten that Harry the afternoon before, had told her he was to pass over the road on which the catastrophe had occurred. Perhaps, too, she would not have remembered the name of the road, even if she had heard it more distinctly mentioned. At any rate she had not yet connected in her mind the disaster of which she was reading, with possible danger to Harry himself.

She ran her eye down the list, pronouncing the names hurriedly, aloud.

"John K. Emory, Mrs. Ellen Kirkland, George Whitty, R. K. Smith, Augustus Sloan."

She skipped the next half dozen. Then, as if the letters had been flashed before her sight, she saw a name, dearest, sweetest on earth to her.

"HARRY LESTER!"

She had not uttered it aloud—she had only seen it glance upon her vision, yet it seemed thundered in her ears and blazed before her eyes.

A piteous, horrified cry escaped her quivering lips.

"Oh, Harry, Harry!" she aspirated in agony.

"Jessie, child, what is it?"

Aunt Mary had appeared at the parlor-door.

"Oh, aunty, aunty!" wailed the stricken girl.

"You terrify me, Jessie. What has happened?"

"The paper, aunty; the cruel news!"

"What news, child? Is any one dead?"

"*Harry is dead*," she said, faintly, but with intense emotion. She did not swoon, overcome by the sudden shock; she stood erect and rigid, glaring at the sheet she still held in her hand.

"Dead, you say, child? Did you read it there?"

"A dreadful railroad accident, aunty. Harry's name is among the killed. Oh, it is cruel!"

Aunt Mary hardly knew how to comfort the stricken one. Tea would not answer in this case—and that was about all the good woman could think of.

Jessie's grief was terrible. Her features seemed set and stony in their expression of woe. Aunt Mary was alarmed.

"If she would only faint!" she thought.

But Jessie did not. She looked like a statue of grief; there was no yielding to the kind weakness nature often exhibits or permits.

"Jessie, Jessie, don't look so wretched. Perhaps the news isn't true—the papers often get things wrong. It may not be Harry that is meant, after all. He was here yesterday; did he say he was going to take that train?"

"Yes, yes, I remember now that he did. Oh, how could I have forgotten it!" And she shuddered as she reflected how utterly unapprehensive she had been as she at first glanced over the account of the disaster.

"Well, he may be only wounded if he *was* on the train. I tell you, child, the papers get things all mixed up. If it was stated that he was *wounded*, I should think him dead sure enough; but if his name is among the killed, I shouldn't wonder if he is not hurt at all."

But Jessie was not to be greatly comforted by this sort of reasoning, though a hope, faint as the flutter of a starved bird's wing, stirred in her aching heart.

"Come up-stairs, Jessie," said her aunt, gently leading her from the room. "Let your father hear of what has happened."

Conductor Dale had just descended to the sitting-room—and there the sad intelligence was imparted to him.

He looked very grave and shocked when he heard it; for he feared that the papers were right in this case.

The first word of comfort he endeavored to speak brought Jessie's tears—and she wept long and exhaustingly.

It was a sad little group indeed.

If Cecil Parnell—the false Wilmer Dorrance—had beheld it, he would probably have been maddened at the thought that Jessie Dale would not have wept such tears for him.

An hour Mr. Dale remained with his daughter, and then he quietly left the house, saying he would be back before he went to his daily duty.

He proceeded directly to Spruce street, to the residence of Ellis Lester, wishing to know to a certainty if Harry's fate was indeed as sad as stated, and thinking of course that his parents would have received confirmation of the terrible news if true, or denial if false. Mr. Dale did not wish to intrude upon the grief of the father and mother; he felt that the relations their son held toward his daughter would hardly have warranted that, for as he acknowledged their superior social position, he believed it most proper for *them*, if they cared to—as he hoped they would—to seek their son's betrothed on this occasion of mutual affliction. So Mr. Dale did not ask to see either Mr. or Mrs. Lester, but merely made inquiries regarding Harry's reported death.

That the saddening news of this had reached his parent's home was evident enough, for a hush and a gloom were upon the household, as if the worst was already known—as if the lifeless body of the young man lay under the roof.

Mr. Dale could hardly bring himself to make the momentous inquiry, fearing that none but the saddest answer could be returned.

"We hear only by the papers as yet that young Mr. Lester is dead," said a friend of the family to whom Mr. Dale had been referred; "but his father went down to the scene of the accident over an hour ago, and we are expecting a telegram from him every moment. Will you wait until it comes?"

He would have several minutes to spare—and he would remain during that time.

But he was not long kept in suspense. A messenger from the telegraph-office soon arrived, bearing the following brief and hopeless message—

"Have this moment discovered the remains of my son. They are frightfully mutilated. Keep this knowledge from Mrs. Lester until I return.

"Signed, E. LESTER."

Stowell Dale turned heart-sick away. Harry was dead. The truth was even more terrible than had been at first announced.

Alas, for Jessie! How could he tell her? But there would be no need to speak—his looks would convey all—all but the harrowing fact of the mutilation.

The conductor reached his home.

Jessie met him with a yearning look of "hopeless hope," but her first glimpse of his shadowed face drove even that away.

"Dead! dead! Harry is dead! I shall never see him in life again!"

"Nor in death, Jessie," said her father, sadly and suggestively, thinking it best for her to know all.

Even in her woe she caught his meaning tone.

"Not even in death, father?"

"No, my child."

"Is his—is his body lost then, father?" she faltered, trembling to speak of him as gone forever.

"It is not, Jessie."

"But his parents would not deny me a last look, father?" she said, apprehensively, a new idea occurring to her.

"No, no—be strong, Jessie; even his mother dare not look upon him again, it may be. Your memories of him are all that you have left."

The poor girl guessed the truth—she knew what horrible mutilations sometimes result from railroad disasters. Harry had suffered thus. And only yesterday she had parted from him, his kiss upon her lips, and his bright, handsome and thoughtful face turning from her with all the glory of his love and hope and happiness upon it. How she would cherish that image! But what an exquisite pain the memory of it was!

"Kiss me, Jessie, I must be going," said her father. "You will be lonely today, and for many days. The dear Lord comfort you, Jessie. It is well now that I taught you to go to Him if trouble ever came."

With eyes streaming anew, she pressed her lips to his, and after a long and silent embrace they parted.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RESULT OF INVESTIGATIONS.

Ellis Lester in a state of intense mental distress arrived at the scene of the disastrous accident, having little hope that the statement of his son's death in the morning journals would be controverted by finding him only wounded.

He had but few inquiries to make before he was informed that a young man whose name had been given as Harry Lester lay dead in a private room of the Riverside Hotel.

He sorrowfully announced that it must be his son, and he proceeded to satisfy himself of the melancholy fact. Several kindly individuals thought it best to intimate to him the condition of the remains, that the shock to the wretched father might not be too great upon his beholding the disfigured corpse.

He entered the apartment where it reposed.

He saw before him an extended form, the features covered, but the attire that of his son. He did not lift the white cloth that so mercifully shrouded the face. He feared to look upon it just then, and did not think it necessary, for he already declared that he recognized the person of his son.

He went immediately to the telegraph office and sent the dispatch we have seen received—the confirmation accepted by Stowell Dale as fatal to all hope of Harry's escape.

Then Mr. Lester returned to attend to the sad duties relating to the removal of the remains of his supposed son. The hotel-keeper, in accordance with Cecil's directions, had procured a coffin, but it had not yet received the body.

Mr. Lester, silent and almost stern in his grief, superintended the mournful work. The face of the victim was still kept covered, but the white cold hands were exposed. On the little finger of the left gleamed the *solitaire*, whose vivid rays sparkled as before.

Mr. Lester knew the ring, and its coruscation was painful to him, for its brilliant but lifeless glow seemed but a mockery of his grief—death had taken all but that insensate sparkle of the gem. Nevertheless he regarded it. But the dead hand that wore it seemed unfamiliar—not so slender and shapely as Harry's had been in life. The other hand was exposed. He saw what he had not seen before. How he stared at it; and in what curious amazement! A large circular scar, wholly healed, however, was on the back. That singular mark could not have been recently made, and he knew Harry's hand had carried none such.

Mr. Lester started forward, thrilled through and through by a most startling thought. Could he have mistaken the body before him for that of his son? Impossible! There blazed the well-known ring; the attire of the corpse was the same Harry had worn. But that curious scar? "Am I going mad?" thought the strangely excited man. The body had been deposited in the coffin.

"Remove the cloth from the face," directed Mr. Lester, abruptly, and with such a peculiarity of utterance that those present were startled.

No one obeyed the direction, however. What hand could remove that screen and show the father the horror it hid?

Mr. Lester threw aside the cloth himself. One searching, fear-filled glance he gave at what was revealed, and then to the astonishment of all, he cried:

"This is not my son! What mystery is here?"

Every one looked in amazement at him.

"Speak!" he exclaimed. "Tell me the meaning of this!"

"Is the body not that of your son?" demanded one.

"It is not; but the very garments that my boy wore yesterday are on it—that ring is his—the pin in the bosom of the shirt—the watch guard—all outer signs I recognize, yet the wearer of them is a stranger. Oh, God! can this be? or am I going mad?"

"He guesses his condition—he *is* going mad," muttered one, pityingly.

"Who brought this body here?" he demanded in a sane, but very excited tone.

"A young man—a friend, he said, of the deceased," answered the landlord. "There was another with him, injured, but not seriously."

"And what became of them?"

"They left at midnight in the train for New York."

"I know not what to ask next," said Mr. Lester in great perplexity, "but something is wrong. Was the name of this stranger given as Harry Lester?"

"It was—on the card there; you can see for yourself."

"Can you describe the person who gave it?"

"A slender-built young man, sir, with deep dark eyes, very dark and abundant beard, and a musical voice. I'd know him only to hear him speak, sir."

"And there was a third party, you say. Describe him, please."

"He, too, was slender, but not so much so as the other. Fair-faced and handsome, I should judge. But he lay in a sort of easy stupor, sir, and I couldn't see his eyes, which is one point I go by to remember a person."

"He was wounded and insensible, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did he recover before he was taken away?"

"No, sir; we carried him to the sleeping-car—the doctor said he might be moved if necessary—as the one that wasn't hurt was in a mighty hurry to get off, and that's the last we saw of either of them. The well one said he would be back this morning to attend to his other friend—him there."

"Were they all in this room together?"

"In this and the next. The young fellow was particular-like, and didn't want to have his dead and his wounded friend crowded in among the others."

"I—I hardly know what to think," said Mr. Lester, his excitement not in the least abated. "There has been a strange game carried on, and I am inclined to believe my son has suffered. These are his clothes; an exchange of garments must have been made."

"Are you sure, sir, that this body is not that of your son?" ventured a doubter, timidly.

"This individual's face is very much disfigured, but I can see that he is not my son. The scarred hand is more than enough to disprove my first belief. I rejoice in the conviction that my boy was not killed, but I cannot understand this extraordinary and mysterious proceeding. Unless," he added to himself, and not without a thrill of apprehension, "unless the conspirators who have attempted my own life are working against my son. It may be that they intend to use him in some way to operate against me. But then the impossibility of their laying a plot whose execution should be attempted in this way! But they might have seized a sudden chance that offered, having already fixed their eyes on my boy."

This he said mentally, his countenance showing his great perplexity and distress.

His anxiety now was to establish beyond doubt the identity of Harry with the individual so strangely removed from the hotel. This by questioning and cross-questioning he was enabled to do. His keen and logical mind quickly reached this conclusion—either with or without studied arrangement his son's person had been seized by designing men, whose intentions were vaguely conceived to be in the highest degree criminal.

For one thing he felt profoundly grateful—his beloved boy, who, as he at first believed, had so suddenly and awfully perished, was yet alive. The revulsion of his feelings from grief and despair to hope, caused a complete change in his manner and aspect. He moved about like one who had escaped some fearful peril, as indeed he had—the peril of a wretchedness, arising from his grief, that would have driven him, perhaps, to madness. For Ellis Lester loved his son as few fathers do their children; and Harry was his all.

His first movement was to hasten again to the telegraph office and send a message requesting the immediate presence of certain well-known detectives, whom he wished to set on the track of the abductors.

This he did even before sending the joyous intelligence that Harry had not perished by the accident, for he considered it of vital importance that not a moment should be lost in instituting a search for the missing youth.

The receipt of the telegram at the Lester mansion contradicting the mournful previous report, caused, as may be imagined, a joyful sensation, though its wording was such as to admit only of a qualified acceptance of the good news. It simply stated that Harry was not dead, as at first reported, but *was missing, with a hope of recovery.*

By noon Mr. Lester was home again, comforting his wife with the assurance that their son was in all probability still alive, and that they might hope to see him before many days. How much better was this to the grief-stricken mother than her first despair! Consumed with anxiety as she still was, the cloud of sorrow had now a silver lining.

But what of Jessie Dale?

Alas! she mourned as if for the dead. The after-revelations did not get into the newspapers; Stowell Dale did not go again to the house of the Lesters; and they, never having seen Jessie as yet, and not being aware that she was the betrothed of their son—for Harry had not communicated the sweet secret to them, as in a day or two he would have done—sent no special information concerning him. Had Harry been indeed dead, and had notice of his funeral been sent to Mr. Dale, he would hardly have attended it, nor under the circumstances would he have permitted Jessie to go. No invitation came. Mr. Dale did not feel aggrieved, for what was he and what was Jessie now to the millionaire and his family?

The conductor did not even make any inquiries into the matter. Young Harry Lester, as he believed, was dead—lost to his Jessie on earth forever.

How quietly, but how truly both father and daughter—if, distracting thought! she *was* his daughter—mourned the supposed departed one! They did not mourn the failure to achieve the brilliant alliance. It was Harry they mourned, the simple, modest, manly, true-hearted youth, whose princely presence had so filled their home and their hearts.

And would he ever return, as if from the dead, to gladden them again?

In a few days at the furthest they would probably learn that they had grieved over a loss which was not yet certainly theirs; they would hear that Harry had *not* perished as had been supposed; but over the mystery of his fate well might they yet weep.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARBURY'S WOOING.

Delays—proverbially dangerous—seemed fated to attend Jay Marbury's plans and plots. Sherwin had not yet been successful in obtaining possession of the desired documents—so at least he wrote. And some time elapsed before Marbury himself could obtain an interview of the kind he wished with his fair prisoner. Mr. Gray seemed to be in the way. At last opportunity offered.

"Good morning, Mrs. Rowland," said Marbury, in his blandest tones, as he entered the lower parlor, where he had requested her to see him, and whither she had gone in the hope that he had some proposition favorable to herself to make.

She returned his salutation, but shrank back involuntarily, for his very aspect proclaimed that his design was so particularly pleasing to himself that it must necessarily be hostile to her.

"You have come to inform me, I trust," she said, pleadingly, "that I am to be released and suffered to return to my friends."

"To Belmont Matthewson?" he asked.

"You know I do not refer to him; he is my enemy."

"He is indeed, lady," said Jay Marbury.

"You admit it, then?" she exclaimed, in surprise.

"I do."

"And you will release me! I may go back to my friends?"

"To the Dales, do you mean?"

"I have no others," she said, sadly, "since my husband has been taken from me."

"You would do well to forget even his memory. Surely—"

She flashed upon him with a lightning glance, and in an impatient, haughty tone said:

"Speak not one word against him, I command you. He once loved and honored me, and would do so still—if he is alive—had not false tongues poisoned his mind until he grew to believe me unworthy of his trust and affection."

"You still retain your foolish faith in his constancy, I see," sneered Marbury. "Do you suppose, Beatrice Rowland, that the proud deceiver who in a moment of infatuation made you his wife, would still care to acknowledge your claim upon him?"

"I do," she declared, passionately. "He was a true and honorable man."

"True and honorable men sometimes commit grave mistakes, which they are afterward anxious to have ignored. Your husband, I think, came to see the folly of his act, though for a time he kept up a profession of regard for you."

"I will not listen to your slanders," declared the lady.

"Why, if he were alive—"

"Oh, I believe he *is* alive, and that you have definite knowledge of the fact," she interrupted, with a sudden rising of hope, forgetting for the moment the gulf that yawned between herself and him.

"I solemnly declare to you, Mrs. Rowland, that it is my belief that he is not. His family, as I have ascertained, have given him up for lost."

Great, shining tear-drops welled from the lady's eyes. Her lonely look of woe might have touched a heart of stone. Perhaps Marbury was moved, for he said, as if to furnish an antidote to her grief:

"But what if he were living? He would not wish to acknowledge the gambler's daughter as his wife, even if he still loved her. His passion has cooled, and he would see the unfitness of such a union."

"You wrong him, Jay Marbury—you wrong him vilely. His affection would have blessed me always, had not your wicked arts led him to believe me unworthy of him. But he is lost to me now, and I can only deplore the fate that takes him from me. I am widowed in heart; defenceless and friendless; yet persecuted as if I were a powerful aggressor, instead of one seeking only obscurity and peace."

"You were never born for obscurity, Mrs. Rowland; you are young and beautiful, and—"

"Cease your unwelcome flatteries. Tell me only why I am here."

"What a useless question! You know well why Belmont Matthewson would have you in his power again."

"Is it most because he fears that I am the possessor of secrets fatal, if divulged, to his schemes of villainy? or because he believes me the rightful heiress of a fortune he seeks to grasp?"

"I cannot give you a definite answer," replied Marbury, thoughtfully. "It is vital to us to know what warning or evidence as relates to the first matter, you are able to give or have given."

"And if I solemnly say to you that I have only imparted information sufficient to make thoughtful and watchful men more thoughtful and watchful, will you believe that I speak the truth?"

"Yes," answered Marbury, promptly.

"And might I hope to be released if you and your confederates are assured that I cannot betray them, even I chose to? which I tell you plainly I *would* do, if I could."

"I see what your aim is. But let me tell you that Belmont Matthewson could not be bought by a bribe of one million golden dollars to let you escape him. No, no, Mrs. Rowland; you are too precious in his sight for that."

She shuddered again, as if in repulsion.

"You do not anticipate much happiness, I see," continued her companion, "in becoming the wife of the son of Belmont Matthewson."

"I will wed no man," she declared, vehemently; "least of all, the fallen and degraded Kimball Matthewson."

"You are aware of his true character, I do not doubt; and yet do you know, my lady, that there is absolutely no escape from the fate marked out for you, if you once return to New York as—"

"His prisoner—or his father's," interposed Mrs. Roland. "I could go in no other way."

"Use what term you please," said Marbury. "I must admit that some repugnance toward the young man is natural; in fact, I quite sympathize with you in your prospective trials."

"You, Jay Marbury!"

"Yes, *I*. Do you think I have no heart—no feeling?"

"From all I ever knew of you, I should judge that your sympathy would not be very refreshing to any one exciting it."

"You do not compliment me," he said, with a flush. "Nevertheless, I assure you that I am very much interested in your case, and stand ready to afford you practical support, even to the extent of preventing Belmont Matthewson or his son from ever annoying you again."

"You, Jay Marbury!" exclaimed the lady, incredulously.

"Yes; they seek you for your money—your millions alone. It would be terrible for one like you to be compelled to marry the dissipated, worthless Kimball Matthewson, corrupt as he is in morals, the victim of a score of vices, and singularly repulsive in person."

"I would die before submitting to the mockery of a ceremony which would embolden him to call me his wife."

"No, you would not; people don't die or kill themselves, if that is what you mean, so easily. But do not distress yourself by picturing such unhappy alternatives. I can save you from all this danger and misery."

"You perhaps can; but will you?"

"Yes," he replied, with a peculiar look of suggestiveness.

"Do you mean that you will permit me to return to the good friends I have found, and molest me no more?"

"Of course there are conditions," he said, evasively. "If I were to do this thing out of pure philanthropy, I fear I would be a fool."

"I know not what you are about to propose, but I need not hope that aid will come from you, Jay Marbury. My liberation at your hands would only be made upon conditions hard, and perhaps dishonorable."

"Your opinion of Mr. Jay Marbury,"

said that individual, with an affected injured air, "is not as charitable as he could desire. But, really, Mrs. Rowland, do you regard me as incapable of a manly and generous action?"

He struck an attitude expressing a mocking deference, letting his eyes drop to his velvet vest-front, where his white fingers toyed with his beautiful watch-chain.

But those modest-acting eyes were full of a cunning light, and when he lifted them the fair woman saw their deceitful gleam.

"Yes," she said, boldly, and with a seathing contempt, under which he winced. "I think that you are incapable of separating a generous act from a selfish motive."

"Hold to your belief then," he returned, with attempted indifference. "Perhaps you are about right after all; it *is* a selfish world. But I really desire to do you and myself mutually a service—a very great service. Will you hear my proposition?"

"I see that I am to be forced to. Therefore I will listen with all possible grace, and then ask to be relieved of your presence."

"The proposition I am about to make you involves very serious danger to myself; should you refuse it, that danger will be increased tenfold. Will you promise to keep the matter secret if you cannot accept my terms?"

"I will make no promises whose scope I cannot know beforehand. When I pledge my word, *I keep it*, Jay Marbury."

"Well, I will—I must trust you. Mr. Gray and I have been studying how to keep you from becoming the victim of a marriage with Kimball Matthewson. We have agreed upon a very satisfactory plan, provided it can only be made acceptable to you."

"I am safe in saying that I do not think it will."

"It will save you much trouble and misery."

"Please end your circumlocution. I am waiting to hear what you have to say."

"It is simply this, Mrs. Rowland—*marry me* and save yourself from the further persecutions of the Matthewsons."

The eyes of the lady blazed with a fierce and scornful light as she heard these words.

"Do you dare to insult me thus?" she demanded. "Knowing I am the wife of another!"

"Only the widow, it may be," said Marbury.

"No, no; his own true wife still, even if death be between us."

"Even if death be *not* between you; but doubt and scorn on his part instead?"

"Even then," said she, in low, deep tones of devotion.

Jay Marbury stared. He evidently did not comprehend such loyalty. But before he could comment upon the absurdity of it, a step at the door of the room startled him.

He looked up and beheld his confederate, Jasper Gray. A tall man, with a singularly erect and graceful figure for one of his apparent age, was Mr. Gray. His eyes were dark and piercing, being the only feature that fully showed, for his face was almost entirely hidden by a flowing, grizzled beard, bushy eyebrows, and abundant gray hair, oddly worn so as to cover the upper portion of his forehead.

His appearance was dignified and almost patriarchal, and Mrs. Rowland was rather relieved than embarrassed by his coming. She acknowledged his presence after a brief introduction by Marbury, by a reserved but not ungracious bow.

Jay Marbury did not understand why his confederate should enter just at that moment. He could not proceed with his matter-of-fact wooing with a third party present—for to tell the truth, Jay Marbury in his cold, bloodless way, was really in love with the lady before him, and could not bring himself to have her rejection of his soulless suit witnessed by another. Besides, there was in the eyes of Jasper Gray as they were turned upon him, a fierce, threatening, angry light that seemed silently to warn him not to continue as he had begun.

And this after their very satisfactory agreement? Was Jasper Gray about to become the champion of Mrs. Rowland? or perhaps a suitor?

The announcement at this juncture, by the quadroon, that breakfast awaited them, caused the two men to withdraw. Mrs. Rowland's breakfast was served in her own room.

(*To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 12.*)

A HIDDEN WRONG;

OR,

Too Trusting and Too Fair.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH MORRISON.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON RALPH'S TRACK.

Although Pat acknowledged Jim as his master, it was scarcely in that young gentleman's nature to yield implicit obedience to anyone, so he contented himself in this case with returning to his old quarters with Molly, and persuading the fierce old African who presided over the dismal kitchen at that establishment to cook some good soup for the poor woman's dinner.

"If she doesn't eat nothing she can't get strong," reasoned poor Pat, still in his character of nurse, "and I like Molly first-rate, even though she won't act fair about poor Lucy."

But when the dish was at last prepared to his satisfaction, and he carried it smoking and savory to her, she turned away with a sick shudder.

"I can't eat, Pat," she said, "I'm too busy thinking to eat," and she dropped her head, and took to the gloomy revery his coming in had interrupted.

No entreaty could prevail upon her to change her mind, so she sat in the same gloomy silence, until the boy tired out with watching her, fell asleep on his rug before the fire, just about twilight.

Then she got up hurriedly, and after assuring herself of the reality of his slumber, put on her out-door wrappings, and stole out noiselessly into the street.

Once having gained the main thoroughfare, there seemed to be no doubt nor uncertainty on Molly's mind as to the place she meant to reach.

Steadily she kept on until she entered one of the more popular streets, and following it for some squares, arrived in the neighborhood of a handsome hotel, on whose broad portico were gathered groups of loungers and smokers, observing the passers-by, and enjoying the evening air.

On one of these she fixed her eyes and scanned him carefully while she herself remained in the shadow of a projecting window.

After thoroughly studying his face with a darkening look on her own, she summoned an idle lad lounging at the corner, and promising him a small reward for the service, bade him go and tell the gentleman whom she carefully pointed out to him that she wished to speak with him for a moment.

Still watching, she saw the lad deliver her message, and marked the scowl and impatient movement that accompanied the man's reception of it.

At this she laughed bitterly to herself and murmured—

"But he will come though, he dare not stay away."

He did come, slowly and reluctantly to be sure, yet when he reached her side he put on an air of conciliation, and smilingly demanded—

"What is it, my good creature, that has gained me this unwonted honor?"

"I am in earnest, Ralph," the woman answered, "very much in earnest. I have been ill almost unto death itself, and I come to try and save you from committing further crimes, for I know now how heavily they weigh down the soul when the last hour comes."

He smothered an impatient oath by changing it into a short, hard laugh.

"So you've taken to preaching as a regular trade, have you, Moll," he asked, half-mocking, half-savagely; "that comes of your gin-drinking. It has made you ruin yourself, and it makes you want to persecute others."

"It is not that," she said, gravely, and apparently taking no offence at his taunts. "I was so sick that I looked death in the face, Ralph. Oh, its horrors froze my very blood. Heaven spared my miserable life, and I mean to use it for better purposes that I may try to wash out the past, and oh, Ralph, I come to you to pray and entreat that you, who have sunk me in a pit of sin, will help me to climb out of it."

"You want me to turn preacher too, do you, Moll?" returned the other with an oath. "Well, I don't believe I'm fitted for the part, or I might try it, ha! ha!"

"Don't mock me!" Moll said, and a deep undertone of warning rang through her words. "I come to you in peace; for your own sake I pray you to do what shall be done, whether you do it or not, that is to free that poor girl Lucy from old Meg's clutches, to whom you have given her over, like the heartless, pitiless hound that you are!"

Her voice had risen, her manner changed, she no longer implored and entreated, her tone was one of command, and her eyes flashed denunciatory fire.

Velour, coward-like, had been coarse and dauntless while her manner was weak and mild; as its fire kindled he changed to a craven again.

"I have nothing to do with the girl," he said, "she has chosen her trade, don't visit it on me."

"She is not in her right mind, you have tortured her to the verge of madness, and you know it," hissed Molly's voice in his ear; then withdrawing, she looked steadily at him by the lamplight under which they stood and said in a slow, deep, concentrated tone—

"You can save her, and I demand of you to do it; carry her back to the home from which you entrapped her, let her have that poor bit of paper that proves her to be lawfully the wife of a demon, and then leave her, swearing never to see, or molest her more, as the only reparation you can make for a great crime. Do you promise me to do this?"

He hesitated, but the gleaming of her eyes, and the clenched force of her outstretched hand, moved his weak soul to fear.

"She's in a devil's humor," he thought, "anything that will quiet her until I get away is well said," then he added aloud—

"Yes, I will promise, but you must give me time."

"Until midnight to-night, no further time is needed. Meg is sure of her prey, and Jim will be absent, let her go, and guide her to the house from whence you took her."

"All right," said Ralph, uneasily, "only do not stand here declaiming, people are staring at us now."

"Then give me some proof of what you are going to do;" she persisted. "I have no reason to trust you, you know."

"Devil take you; can't you let me go?" he cried petulantly, as she laid her hand on his arm.

They had begun to walk on together through the darkening streets, and his temper chafed sorely under this forced surveillance. With steady determination she answered in the same low meaning tone—

"You shall give me proof of your meaning to do as you promise," and she held him tightly with her nervous hand.

"I'll see you dead first," he shrieked, breaking into profane rage, and the same instant he struck her with his heavy hand, flinging her back so that she staggered fearfully and fell against the brick wall of a garden that bordered the street.

He strode forward after this unmanly act, only looking back once to assure himself that she no longer followed him.

Apparently she had given up pursuit; he turned a corner and hurried onward, felicitating himself on being rid of her.

"Somehow she frightens me in spite of myself," he acknowledged; "those flaring eyes of hers, and that half-drunk, half-frantic manner makes my blood run chill; but by Heaven I'll out them all at one blow, and free myself from the cursed gang at a leap, when I get that little bit of evidence I'm looking for; and by the Furies I've got on the right trace at last, and death and the devil shan't rob me of my prize!"

Still, for all his bold words, he cast a frightened look over his shoulder as he went on, and kept muttering to himself that "he would soon give her the slip and be out of the way of her tricks before long."

Molly was an adept in secrecy, and no sooner had she recovered from the shock of his blow, the violence of which shook her weakened frame sorely, than she darted forward in pursuit of him, keeping herself unseen, and soon holding him in view once more.

She kept in the shadow, crossing from side to side as the lights changed, and floating lightly over the ground in her black mantle, like an ominous night bird.

At length he had reached his destination, a brilliantly-lighted store on a fine street, before the windows of which he lingered an instant, as if to assure himself of its occupants, and then passed in.

Moll came out of her concealment swiftly and crossed noiselessly over, taking her place also at the window, and glancing over its stores of beautiful and glittering wares, at the figure of a very handsome young girl, dressed in plain mourning, who waited on customers with a quiet, saddened grace of manner, and as yet appeared unconscious of the presence of Velour, who stood near the door, looking steadily toward her.

Moll had seen the girl before. She had seen her watching, kneeling in agonized grief and humble prayer beside what for a time appeared to be her sister's dying bed.

She had observed the deep, pitying love that gave no reproaches, the strong faith and courage that strove to inspire the poor wanderer with hope and peace, and in her own arid soul she had clung to the memory of that devoted sister, and wished that Heaven had blessed her with such unwavering love.

And it was this pure, true creature, the fiend she had struggled with now meant to sully and drag down to the dark pit of misery and shame! She uttered a groan of horror at the thought, and turned away her eyes in heart-sick wonder.

When she looked again a space was cleared before Marian's counter, and Ralph leaned over it, talking in a low tone. The girl's face paled, then flushed again as she listened; and once, with a sudden and apparently uncontrollable gesture, she stretched out her hand toward him, so that he took it in his and made as though he would have pressed his lips to it.

Molly could look no longer.

"The demon has put his spell upon that angel," she cried, "and the depths of torment yawn to receive her!"

She turned and rushed away through the darkness, eager to shut out the sight, and a sound seemed to follow her like a distinct and audible whisper, saying—

"Spare him no longer. Let him die—let him die!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

JIM BALL'S DESIRE TO RETIRE FROM BUSINESS.

Up at Todd's, Meg Worthy was seeing busy days, and meeting them in great hope and high spirits. Her new pupil was passive beyond her expectations, and although Jim objected to her staring before her so constantly and sitting motionless by the hour as rather a scary trick for a countess, Mrs. Worthy assured him that she never saw a girl more calculated to "take in," and pronounced her a gem in dress.

"She's tried on her fixings, and she looks a queen; done up in toggery, nothing can be slicker than the figure she cuts; and if you don't do the job right, then you're a fool, and that's all I have to say about it."

Jim, to whom these words were addressed, was in rather a perturbed humor of late, and had been forced, through various reasons, to postpone a job he had long had on hand, but which he particularly desired to keep a secret from Mrs. Worthy, his partner and coadjutor in all else.

In fact, Mr. Ball had become tired of partnerships altogether, and was determined to break through his in a most unceremonious manner as soon as he should be able to accomplish the business on hand.

His secret expedition, planned with Pat, he had represented to Mother Worthy to be only a trip into the country to make observations around a handsome country seat, whose silver chest he had future designs upon; but it was in reality his determined plan to break into the Blanchard mansion, the inside of which he was perfectly familiar with, and yet he had been haunting the place ever since his last visit there in the character of a countryman.

Old Todd, the receiver, without whose help none of the spoil of such depredations could be made available, had not been consulted by Jim, as usual, and in his preparation for the deed he had included nothing in the way of a sack or other receptacle in which to bear away the results of his thievish plunder. No, Jim was bent on rich game.

"I'm after something that will make me rich, so that I can cut this work and live like a swell nob," he told himself, and he meant to get possession of this talisman of wealth on the day before he started on his Washington trip, so as to carry it with him abroad and make terms from thence as to changing it into gold.

"I'm not much of a debater at a pen, but I can manage to make 'em understand me, I guess," said Mr. Ball, cogitating over his project. "If I find the young un over in France, I'll try my luck with him, and if he bids fair and pays up honest, he shall have the family treasure; but if he goes off at a tangent, as he did from the Frenchman's, why he must take his choice, and I'll do my bargaining with the lady mother herself, and get the cub out of the way if she pays me fair for the job."

The ruffian closed his soliloquy with a tremendous oath, and Mrs. Worthy coming in upon him suddenly, looked sharply at his face before she spoke—

"You don't seem in a good humor, Jim," she said, doubtfully. "I hope nothing's gone wrong."

"Not that I know of, except that I don't hitch well with that shiny-coated sneak, Velour; he's too greedy and too lazy. He never works for himself, and he expects to halve things just as if he did. Where is he now?"

"Hush, Jim, don't cut up rough with him; you see he's disappointed, and we must rub him smooth and easy while there's anything at stake. He has a hankering after the property that his old flame, Soubette's daughter, enjoys—and he has got hold of some silly notion about there having been a clue to all the family secrets hidden away in a locket, in the shape of a delicately-folded paper. That's what he's after; I supposed Lucy knew where it was, because I gave her the locket that I hooked one day, in a little game of my own. But the girl can't talk of anything that's by-gone it seems—and he gets provoked with her too easy. You know, Ralph, his hand's always up for a blow to any one weaker than himself—and if he struck her now it would spoil things for us. So what I say is, let's keep him easy if we can, Jim; it's money in our pockets to do it."

To this Jim growled an answer, whether favorable or not did not seem clear, and looking out of the window, wondered where little Pat kept himself.

"He's gone on an errand for me; but the brat is worth nothing since Moll has been bad, he seems to watch over her as an old hen would over a sick chick," Jim remarked, in a cross and injured tone; adding that "the young un better look sharp or he'd give him a lame leg in real earnest, to do his begging with."

"Here's Pat coming now, Jim," said Mrs. Worthy, in a pacific tone; "he's been a-hurrying, as you can see by his red face."

"I'll go out and meet him; I want a walk," said the robber, getting down off the old table he was half stretched out upon, and yawning as he moved to the door.

Mrs. Worthy followed him with a furtive look; she was not sure of any of her company in these days; they were not quite reliable in mood, and she had enough to do to keep "things easy," as she called it.

"Well, what is the shiny rascal up to now?" Jim inquired of Pat, as he met him in Todd's entry. "Did you keep him close in view all the time as I told you to, and have you brought me a clear story?"

"Yes, I dodged him till my back is a'most broke, running behind boxes and things, and creeping round railings," Pat returned; "he's pretty sharp in these days, and seems all eyes, as if he suspected some one to blow on him."

"Yes, the sneaking Judas," sneered Jim, giving his words weight with an oath or two, "he knows that he's playing double, and so he's looking for what he deserves. Where did he go first?"

"Why he carried a note to that there big house on Lexington Terrace—the same one we are set on."

Jim uttered a fierce and blasphemous ejaculation, and added—

"Are you sure it was to Blanchard's he went?"

"Yes, 'cause I went behind him all the way. That was very early in the morning, and he was fixed up in old togs, so that no one could have known him only me, and I see him start."

"What did he say, when he left the note?"

"He told the man to be sure and give it to Mrs. Blanchard; and then he went home and dressed hisself, after taking a nap. When he started again, he had a watch to time hisself by—and he went right to a corner of the Park and hid hisself in the evergreens there. Pretty soon along came that lady, her that lives in the big house, you know."

"Mrs. Blanchard?"

"Yes, and she carried the note in her hand, that Velour left at her door in the morning, and looked at it, and then at her watch, and then all around her with such a queer frightened look, as if she wanted to see somebody that she was afraid to meet. Would you believe it, that there Velour never come out one single step, but just kept hid away, and the poor lady waited and looked more and more troubled until it seemed as if she would go wild. At last she went off, and after awhile he come out laughing as if he thought it fun."

"What did he do then?" Jim asked, breathlessly, and in evident interest.

"He went off to that store where Miss Marian is—"

Pat stopped quickly, and his face grew suddenly red.

"Who did you say?" Jim demanded, and added, "How did you find out her name, you young imp?"

Evidently disgusted with himself, for want of prudence in allowing his knowledge of his favorite to betray itself, Pat muttered rather unintelligibly something about "supposing a thing just for the sake of fun, you know," and added—

"I had to call her something, and didn't think you'd care what it was."

"No more I do," Jim replied, "what I want to hear about is Velour's doings."

"Well, that's about all," Pat said; "he hung round that store—and once he went down town and got his dinner in a restaurant. Please let me go and get mine, Jim, for I'm tired to death," pleaded the boy in conclusion.

"Yes, go—and here's something for a treat," said the robber, in a burst of generosity, throwing the little fellow a coin. "When you've eaten your supper, go to bed and get rested, Pat. I don't think I'll need you to night—if I do, I'll be after you in good time; but keep sharp, and have your wits about you when you're called."

"Jim," said the boy, pausing in the act of spinning up his newly-acquired treasure in the air, and becoming very serious, "we're a-going to do something risky, I guess; and I want you to promise to take good care of Molly, if anything happens to me—now won't you, Jim? If you do, I'll be sharper than steel, and you shan't lose your game through me."

Jim bade the boy "get along with his fatherly airs," and laughing loudly, gave him a harmless kick as a parting blessing.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EUGENE'S EYES DECEIVE HIM.

Marian and her mother seemed daily to grow farther and farther apart, as the influence of Mrs. Blanchard became more fixed over the mind of the latter. And the subject of the absent Lucy was no longer mentioned between them, since Marian had refused to receive Mrs. Blanchard's inventions as news of her poor sister.

But she had one new and most welcome source of strength and comfort, in the developing thoughtfulness, and newly-formed good principles of her brother Allan.

He was slowly but steadily recovering, owing to the great care and untiring kindness of the young physician, who visited him still, though Marian never met him now.

He seemed deeply interested in the family, and had already bound Allan to him by the strongest ties of grateful affection; and his rejoicing sister secretly attributed much of the happy change she had found in the brother's disposition and opinions, to the excellent influence of the practically good and generous doctor.

"I'll tell you what I mean to do, Marian," said Allan, one evening as they sat together after he had been able to be brought down stairs. "I mean to begin life in earnest before long, and I've thought of the quickest and easiest way. You remember Esther Grover's people, and their farm at Westgate Hills? Well, I'm going there to work when the summer comes. It will give me strength and muscle, and although I expect it will be pretty hard at first, still I'll soon grow used to it, and make quite a farmer."

Marian looked at her brother's delicate hands, wasted by long illness, and thought of the life of study entirely separated from all bodily exertion, that it had pleased her father to allot to him. All this made her shake her head a little incredulously, but Allan was not lacking in determination and courage, for he met her unbelief in the right spirit.

"You think I am too weak, too much pampered by foolish indulgence, to accomplish anything, dear Marian," he said, sadly, "and I am sorry to say that you have reason, judging from the past, for such a belief. But that idle time's gone by, and I'm like some one really awake, for the first time in my life. I have counted all the obstacles, and prepared myself to meet all the difficulties, and I'm going to do it. Just think, Marian, if I do my utmost, as I mean to try, I can get farm wages from Mr. Grover, with my boarding included; and beside that, I can earn something keeping the books of the country store, in the evening. I wrote to Mr. Grover, and he has promised to get me the job."

"Why, Allan, you are going to work in real earnest," cried his sister, in pleased recognition of his new energies.

"Yes, it is time," returned her brother, with a self-reproachful sigh. "I have wasted years in trying to rise on your and poor Lucy's wings. I have made my sisters work for me too long, and I'm ashamed and sorry for it. But Marian," he continued, his eyes beaming hopefully, "it is not too late yet to begin right, and Lucy will come back, so that we can be together again, as we should be. Won't we, Marian?"

"I hope so," answered his sister, fervently; but she bowed her head, and her tears would come though she strove to hide them, for her very soul was heavy over the unknown fate of the absent Lucy.

At Mr. Pandar's store, Marian's work was of the easiest and most agreeable description. Contact with fine goods and delightful perfumes was pleasing to the refined tastes of the young saleswoman, and even Miss Gimper's loose morals and coarse ways failed to injure the pure mind and strong principles of Marian Barton. She looked on her and Mr. Pandar as the less agreeable part of her position and its associations, but behaved to them so courteously, and proved herself at once so attentive, industrious and sweet-tempered, that she was in a fair way to overcome evil with good. Her great and constant persecutor and annoyer had from the first been the man whom Miss Gimper called Velour, and this man still pursued her with a determined pertinacity she could in nowise account for. It was not for the purpose of mere gallantry that he hung over her counter, and whispered honeyed and repulsive flattery into her ear; she was too keen in her observing powers not to see that the man had some curious motive, only partially hid beneath this mask of pretended admiration. He watched her narrowly, and would spring forward and almost rudely seize her hand, if she chanced to hold a small piece of paper in it, or take from her pocket any memorandum connected with her business. Once she was forced to complain to her employer of this inexplicable rudeness, and Mr. Pandar actually made bold to chide his customer for such inquisitive demonstrations. Velour only laughed, and said he had a very great interest in the young lady, of which he would prove the genuineness by and by. Then he gave Marian a meaning look, and left the store, while Miss Gimper broke out in contemptuous comment on her companion's over-censoriousness.

"You must be blind, Pandar, or you'd see that this new Miss means to lead us all by the nose," said Miss Gimper, snappishly, for she was jealous of Marian's influence over her employer, and every one else. "She has new airs and graces every day, and the fellows don't dare to cut a joke in her presence, but are getting to be as stiff and affected as a set of fashion-plates."

"Never mind, Gimper," Mr. Pandar returned, decidedly, "it takes, and that's the great question, as you know. The sales never were better, and I'm satisfied, even if she does trim the young swells in a little, and makes 'em mind their manners: they were getting too loud and free before she came, and that's a fact."

This conversation did not take place in Marian's presence. It was on the day of the evening when Molly Dance followed Ralph Velour, to urge him to do justice to Lucy, by restoring her to her friends; and Marian had begged to be excused for a short time during the early morning hours, when business was dull, that she might carry out her mournful daily plan, of consulting the register of the drowned at the city morgue.

She was haunted by a sickening terror that Lucy might yet be driven to take her own life; and carrying this secret dread hidden in her own burdened heart, she watched with anxious alarm lest her description might appear among the "found drowned."

As yet, she had been spared the fearful confirmation of her haunting terror, and she returned to the store, pondering over Mrs. Blanchard's threats, and looking warily around lest her evil genius, as she believed her to be, should be found following her, and guessing her late errand.

It was growing late when she entered the store, and the lights were on, and Miss Gimper busy behind the counter, with quite a bevy of customers.

She hastily took her own place, and began to be busy serving those who seemed to prefer to have her wait on them, while Miss Gimper, who was rather out of temper, pushed the boxes and cases around, and answered questions in a rather intimidating manner.

Feeling distressed at this exhibition of temper in her companion, she did her best to conciliate her in every way, and being thus engaged, was not aware of Mr. Velour's presence until he leaned over her counter, and said in her ear:

"I could give you news of some one you would be glad to hear from."

The color rushed in a crimson tide into her face and neck as she heard the words, and Eugene's name rushed to her lips simultaneously with Lucy's.

She did not utter either, but with a strong effort of self-control, remained quiet whilst Velour went on to say:

"There is a dear, sweet young lady who believes me to be her tried and honest friend, and who cherishes a warm love for her sister, though strange and untoward circumstances forced her to leave her very unaccountably. For that dear girl's sake I have endeavored to win your confidence and regard—I regret to say, in vain."

"Do you—can you—is it possible that you mean my sister Lucy?" exclaimed Marian, breathlessly.

"I do," Velour answered, and looked her quietly in the face.

It was with a rush of emotion pleasant and painful, that Marian received this assurance.

She had always doubted and shrunk from the speaker with an indefinable aversion, but her longing for tidings from her lost sister overcame every other feeling, and she stretched out her hands eagerly, and almost grasping his, begged him to speak further, and for Heaven's sake to tell her only the truth, as he hoped for love and mercy in his hour of need.

Then this conscienceless wretch leaned over the intervening barrier that separated them, and calling Heaven to witness his truth and devotion to her, told her that Lucy Barton was the wife of his friend and comrade, for whom he invented a name nearly similar to his own.

He described the character of this supposititious friend, as good but weak and inclined to vacillation, and represented him as belonging to a reduced but highly aristocratic family, who had for years cherished far different matrimonial views for their only son and representative.

To this gentleman's want of true courage, in dreading a family climax too much to boldly announce his marriage at the proper time, Mr. Velour attributed all the distress and uncertainty to which his fair and trusting bride had been reduced: but they were united now after mutual wanderings and painful misunderstandings, and the young husband had at last found courage to write to his father and announce his choice and future determination to abide by it.

"I myself carried the letter," concluded Mr. Velour, candidly, "and I have undertaken to accommodate matters, as I shall no doubt be able to do very successfully, for the old gentleman cannot be harsh enough to resist so sweet a daughter-in-law, and I am now endeavoring to fulfil another part of my confidential duty in bringing you Lucy's best love, and this insight into her position."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Marian, cordially, "but when shall I see my dear, dear sister?"

Mr. Velour put his hand in his vest pocket and felt for something he could not find.

"She was to put a ring in my pocket," he said, with a simple, truthful air. "She said it was one you would know, because your father gave you each one on your seventeenth birthday."

Marian looked at a small gold circlet on her own slender finger and said—

"So he did, Lucy is right, and I thank her for the forethought; it would all seem like a dream to me without some test. But when shall I see her, oh, when may I go to my dear sister?"

Her earnest tone, so full of prayerful entreaty, would have choked any other man's lies in his throat; but Ralph Velour knew no compunction; he never changed countenance, except from craven fear, and at present he was triumphant in every fibre of his wicked heart.

"I must see them both. I am on my way there now, and will return an hour later with a message for you," he said.

Oh, how heartily poor Marian thanked him and blessed him!

His words had made her twice happy. Lucy was found, and need no longer fear the scorn of the cruel world.

She was an honorably-married woman, and the cloud of shame that hung over the family name melted away like mist in the sunshine of this assurance.

Why should she doubt or cavil at the one who brought her such good tidings, and offered her proof of its truth!

She could have fallen on his neck and wept for very joy, but as it was she thanked him most earnestly, and said she should not leave the store till his return and smiling and promising haste, he departed.

Molly Dance had witnessed part of this scene, and fled away overcome by the excitement of her feelings, some time before Mr. Velour, with a smirk of satisfaction on his face and an additional swagger in his presumptuous bearing, took his way down the street, soliloquizing to himself—

"At first I thought I'd give her the ring to begin with, but this last dodge is the best, and the whole string took beautifully! Ha, ha, ha! it was a lucky thought in me to take it from Lucy's finger on a venture, and pretending to be jealous, ask her how she got it; but I'm a lucky dog in every way, upon my word I am, a desperately lucky dog!"

He stopped under the next lamp to take out a ring, the duplicate of the one that Marian showed him a little while before, and turning it round while he whistled a gay tune, determined to walk as far as the hotel and then return to "play out the game," as he said.

Nearly an hour later a gentleman, who had been walking slowly and observingly up the street, looking from side to side among the lighted stores, as if searching for a particular number, came to a sudden stand opposite Mr. Pandar's window, and looking inside, saw Marian Barton's face all aglow with pleasure as she leaned forward with her hand outstretched to receive a ring which Ralph Velour was about to place upon her finger.

The gentleman's face, which was young and handsome, bore the traces of recent illness upon it, and was besides at that moment a prey to such strong and painful emotion as to strike any one who might have looked upon it as expressing an agonized mental struggle.

But no one saw the look of hopeless despair that settled over his fine features, nor could read the thoughts that passed rapidly and painfully through his mind.

"This, then, is the end of all doubt: this, then, seals my heart's doom, and overthrows its idol. Ever since I have been able to leave my room, I have searched for one sight of her, hoping against hope that the boy's story might be false, that her own cruel words might have been forced from her by some power our united love could subdue.

"But now I see it was indeed too true: she has given herself to another, and such an one, my very soul recoils from such a rival!"

These were his thoughts, and as his pride rebounded from the blow aimed at his heart, his anger gleamed like a volcanic light in his fine dark eyes. "Such a rival!" and he measured the false villain, Velour, with his fine plumage, his false color and teeth and dye and sparkle, and pronounced him what he was—"A wicked cheat."

"My friend, Eugene!" cried a voice full of cheery ardor at his shoulder, "have I found you at last, my dear old boy!" and two friendly hands grasped his with eager affection, and almost hugged him in their warm and cordial pressure.

"Max, my good friend," the artist said, in a broken voice, "I am glad to see you, even though I am too much shaken by late illness, and—and some mental distress—to bid you welcome as I should—"

"Never mind anything, except that after a weary and perplexing search, I've had the good luck to light on you in the very nick of time."

And utterly unconscious of the scene on which his friend had been so excitedly gazing, Heatherton began to draw him away, talking eagerly and hopefully all the time.

"Shall we not come at once to my office, where we can converse freely, my dear Eugene?" he said, displaying an almost irresistible enthusiasm of manner. "I have somehow become singularly connected with much that concerns you, and believe that the information I have got to impart, will be for the most part pleasant enough to set like magic on your pale face, that tells me your illness has been no slight affair, and in some measure accounts for your seclusion from the outer world."

"I have lately found friends, my dear Max," Eugene said, influenced despite his own gloom, by his friend's ardor, "and if you really have anything to impart, I shall be glad if you will accompany me to my home, and be presented to them. They have heard of you," he added, "and know how good you are, and how I value you; shall we go on?"

"Anywhere you lead, my dear Eugene!" cried the doctor gayly, and putting his arm through his friend's, they went on together.

(*To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 8.*)

☞ THE HEIGHT OF SELF-SACRIFICE.—A Belgian newspaper recently published an advertisement to the following effect: "A good-looking young man wishes to meet with a rich and beautiful young lady of good family, with a view to matrimony. He would consent, if required, to live with his mother-in-law."

☞ The Bishop of St. Pierre, Canada, was assassinated while at prayer in the chapel, some time ago, by his nephew, who was incited to the crime by the fact that the bishop had inherited all the fortune of the nephew's father.

☞ A justice of Guthrie county, Iowa, decided in the case of a citizen who brought suit against his daughter's lover for ejecting him from his own parlor one Sunday night, that courting is a necessity and must not be interrupted, therefore the laws of Iowa will hold that a parent has no legal right to a room where courting is afoot; and so the defendant was discharged, and the plaintiff had to pay the costs.

JACK AND HIS GILL.

BY MILLIE W. CARPENTER.

They were loitering in the garden, two amiably-disposed young people, full of health and spirits, and the vague delicious hopes of youth. Both were possessed of good looks; the girl was a bright-haired blonde, and the gentleman, a dark and comely specimen of his sex—and both had a fair share of that worldly wealth, which modern philosophy tells us, goes so far toward making happiness.

"I wonder," said Jack, pulling the rose branches about, "if there is anything in nature sadder than a dead rose! I think not."

Mabel, with her elbows on the gate, looking out in the dusk and thinking of nothing in particular, opened her pretty, wide, gray eyes still wider with surprise.

"I am sure I don't know why you should think so," she answered, quietly. "Everything dies in time, I suppose, even the roses. And there are other flowers."

"Other flowers!" repeated Jack, savagely. Ordinarily he hated sentiment—but to-night, being in a low mood, he liked humiliating himself. He liked standing there, like a novel-reading school-girl, saying things, which, another time, he would have sneered at and called "spooney."

"I was reading, the other evening," he went on, "that there is nothing in life sadder than a dead love. I suppose you would say of that too in the same way, 'there are other loves,' if one has a taste for them. A dead rose and a dead love, they go very well together." And Jack, big, strong, hard-working Jack, now at the lowest depths of sentiment, thrust his hands in his pockets and sighed dolorously.

Mabel of the golden hair, with her elbows on the gate looking out into the red and yellow dusk, did not answer him. She was watching a slattern girl coming up the street, dragging a cross baby behind her in a big shambling willow-carriage. The baby was crying, and the girl was singing to it some kind of a nursery-rhyme, "Sleep little baby, sleep, sleep!" in a loud, rough voice, enough to drive anybody distracted, Mabel thought, and leaning over the gate, she called to the girl, asking her what she was frightening the child to death in that manner for.

Finding that his companion was paying no attention to him, Jack began pulling the rose-bushes about. All the beautiful specimens for which the Gorton gardens were celebrated—the Alpine and snowy Cherokee and lovely musk roses—had bloomed, and made the earth lovely during their brief day, and were now faded and dead. But down among the tangled branches, a late Chinese bud had opened its delicate pink petals that very morning, and was now wasting its sweetness unnoticed, on the garden air. Jack picked it eagerly, and stood holding it out to Mabel with an odd, humble, pleading look in his dark eyes.

"Here is a rose for your hair to-night, Mab! I am glad I found it; but it is the last one, I am afraid. You will have to do without them after this, when you go to dancing-parties."

"Thank you!" said Mab, graciously. She smiled without once looking at him, as she took the flower, breaking off a thorn and sticking it carelessly in her hair. "I dare say I shall not want any more. Papa writes that he is expecting mamma and the girls home pretty soon; and then I shall go back to the city. Most likely this is the last party I shall go to."

Just then the great hall clock began to strike, and the sound came out to them clear and distinct. One, two, three. Mab counted the strokes, seven in all, and then gathered her shawl about her with a pretty look of consternation.

"Seven o'clock! and I have not so much as dressed my hair. I shall be dreadfully late. I wish you would come, just for this one evening," she added, stopping to look back over her shoulder at Jack's solemn face.

But the young fellow drew himself stiffly up.

"No thank you," he answered, with a black look. "You know I don't dance. If there were any need of my accompanying you, I would go; but as Mr. Stewart is coming after you, you won't have any use for me. What is it, Burrows?"

For the chief tenant, manager and man-of-all-work on Jack's farm had come up and now stood at his elbow somewhat ostentatiously soliciting a hearing.

"I have been hunting for you the most part of the afternoon," said the man, with reproach in his look for the master who had been so unkind as to be out of the way when wanted. "Dobbs has sent word that he can't go any further with the building till more plank is sent over from the mills. He says the men are anxious to finish up this week," &c., &c.

"Dobbs—plank—mills," the manager's loud voice droned indistinctly in Jack's ears as he stood watching Mab's slim, white figure going up the walk, her pretty fair head bent with the weight of thought.

Should she wear white muslin or the pearl-gray silk made over from one of Bertha's last year's party dresses? And should she go to the trouble of doing all those crimps and puffs and braids which a grand toilette demanded? There would be no one but Sam Stewart—Mr. Stewart, as Jack politely put it. But then Mr. Sam Stewart had had his season in Paris, and professed to be a judge of a lady's dress; he liked grand effects, and rather laughed at the white muslin style of young women. To be sure, she might never see him again, unless—unless—

Then the rose dropped from her hair. Jack saw it; he saw, too, that she did not miss it, but passed on, leaving it lying unnoticed in the path, and his heart gave a little throb of jealous pain. He remembered seeing Stewart's man coming to the door that afternoon with a large bouquet for Mabel. Rare hot-house blossoms, most likely, heavy with scent and sweetness, for Mrs. Stewart prided herself on her conservatory, while at Gorton Place there was nothing but Jack's roses. Mrs. Gorton was an invalid, whose life was bounded by rows of pill-boxes and lines of tiny phials, containing homœopathic doses of medicine, and it could not be expected that she would wear out her frail strength in taking care of a garden.

Jack, telling Burrows that he would attend to him in a moment, picked up the rose with a sigh and put it in his vest pocket, just as Mabel disappeared in the hall.

When he came in late that evening from his interview with Dobbs, he found the parlor entirely deserted. The tea-table was standing just as the ladies had got up from it. Even the plates had not been cleared away, nor the crumbs swept up. The remnants of the feast were there; bits of cake and biscuit and dishes of preserved fruit, round which the flies hovered, and a daddy-long-legs came to grief in the soft butter. Jack poured himself a cup of tea, perfectly cold, and sat down with a sigh, dimly wondering where Jane was, and if Mabel had gone to the party.

He did not think of complaining, for he was only a cipher in his own house. He had provided everything so long and in such a quiet way, that it was expected as a matter of course. "Jack, we want this," and "Jack, we want that." He got everything and exacted so little in return, that they all got to saying, "It's only Jack; he won't mind," and entirely neglected him. Even Jane, the servant-maid, who took her twenty dollars a month out of his pocket with clock-like regularity, got in the habit of thinking, "It's only Master Jack," and now stood talking with Dobbs over the garden-gate, while she should have been seeing to her master's comfort.

While Jack was sitting there, with the long wick of the candle flickering and flaring, throwing an uncertain light over the uninviting table, the door opened and Mab came in to show herself before she went away with Mr. Stewart. She had on the pearl-gray silk dress, and the skirt trailed on the floor and made soft waves of sheeny light as she walked. Some rich black lace was laid over it with fine effect, and a single great golden flower trembled in her soft crimped fair hair.

"Do you think it pretty, Jack?" she asked shyly, blushing and stepping up and down, that he might see how fine she was.

Then her eyes fell on the table, and a hot, red flush of anger and shame rose to her cheeks, sweeping away the coquettish smiles and dimples.

"Oh! what a shame. You have had no tea, and there is no one to wait on you. Why do you let yourself be treated so?—where is Jane?" and gathering up her silken skirts in her hands, she ran into the kitchen in a tremor of indignation.

Jack heard her voice a moment after, calling sharply to the delinquent maid, who ran into the house, frightened at the tumult, and making excuses. Mabel stood over her for a moment, flashing, angry, almost in tears.

"It is your own fault," she said, coming back to Jack. "You let yourself be neglected. You take care of everybody else's comfort, but never think of your own. Why don't you insist on having things: you have only to speak and they would soon understand. Why don't you be selfish like the rest of us?"

Jack smiled, looking rather sadly at the beautiful young creature who was for the moment so ready to fight his battles and see that he was properly taken care of. It was sweet even to be scolded at, for it showed that she took some thought of his comfort.

"Dear Mab," he said, "never mind! I am used to it. How pretty you look to-night in that dress."

"Do you think so?" said Mab, brightening. "The dress is made of one of Bertha's old ones; but it is rather nice after all."

"One of Bertha's old ones," repeated Jack, with a curious look. "Do you wear Bertha's dresses made over? If you were my—I mean if I were your father, you should never wear anybody's old dresses. You should always have new ones."

Mabel blushed up, looking hurt and offended.

"You know papa cannot afford everything as he would like," she answered with beautiful dignity. "Bertha and Gertrude have to be provided for first—they are the oldest, and they are a great expense—too much so, sometimes, I am afraid. But when they are married my turn will come."

"When they are married! But suppose Bertha and Gertrude are never married; what then?" said Jack, with a queer little sad laugh.

"Oh, I dare not think of such a possibility. It would be too horrible! after such efforts, too!" and with a little malicious smile Miss Mabel gathered up her draperies, her fan and gloves, and kissing her hand to Jack, floated away out into the hall and into Mr. Stewart's waiting arms, leaving Jack to the hot tea and muffins which penitent Jane brought in. And Jack, drinking his tea all alone, wondered if it was always to be his fate to remember her as she was going away from him, saying good-bye. That very afternoon he had stood watching her as she left him, looking back over her shoulder, with the rose he had given her dropping out of her hair; and now she had gone away again, dancing and kissing her hand. He wondered if the time would ever come when he could remember her as coming to him, clinging and wanting his help, asking for protection and comfort.

Patience, Jack!—everything comes in time.

The next morning when the master of Gorton Place took his seat at the breakfast-table he found a lugubrious face sitting opposite to him, instead of the smiling one Mab usually showed. The morning mail had been brought in. Two or three papers and a letter lay by Jack's plate, but Mab, who had always received a line from the doting father at home, had nothing.

"Do you think he can be sick?" Mabel appealed to Jack. "In the letter I got from him yesterday morning he complained of headache and of feeling tired and overworked. He never failed to write before. Just at this time, too, when there are such dreadful reports of the cholera. Mr. Stewart says that Dr. Satchell went down yesterday with a detachment of nurses for the hospitals."

"Ah! that explains," says Mrs. Gorton, in her weak, invalid's voice; "I can see now the meaning of my dreadful dreams last night. I always have such presentiments when there is to be a death in the family." Mrs. Gorton was a cousin, far removed, to Mab's father. "Females in white walking up and down, chanting funeral hymns. I never fail to hear of sickness and death after I have had such dreams."

"Nonsense, mother!" cried Jack, angrily, seeing Mab's white, horror-stricken face. "What stuff you are talking; no doubt Mr. Miller is well as we are, and Mabel will get a line from him to-morrow, telling her so. Your dreams are nothing but fancies."

"You great, strong men can never tell what intuitions come to us women who possess fine organizations," sighed Mrs. Gorton. "It is quite remarkable the number of deaths and disasters I have foretold by dreaming of them. I used to be called the fortune-teller in my family; but no one pays attention to me now." She measured two or three drops of liquid out of a tiny phial, of which the cork was much the larger part, and, diluting the potion with water, drank it before beginning her breakfast.

"I can foretell one thing for you, and that is that you are killing yourself with medicine," said Jack, roughly. He seldom interfered with his mother's fancies, but the sight of Mab swallowing tears with her coffee was too much for the great, tender heart.

Mabel followed Jack into the hall after a hasty breakfast.

"I think I must go home," she said. "What if papa should be sick, and all alone in that great house. Not even a servant. I have been reading of people found dying all alone in tenements, of that awful epidemic. I shall never forgive myself if he is sick and I don't go to him."

"My dear Mab," said Jack, touched by her pale, frightened face and her piteous eyes, "you are very nervous; you are tired after dancing half the night. We can easily telegraph, and find out if anything is wrong."

"What good would a telegraph do, when there is nobody at the house with him?" flashed Mab, angrily. "And if he is really sick, there would be all the delay. I could not go till to-morrow. I have thirty minutes now to get to the train, if you will only be so good as to see me off."

"You are not fit to travel alone," said Jack, decidedly. "If you really insist on going, I shall go with you."

"Oh, you dear, kind Jack," cried Mab, catching his hand impetuously, and kissing it. "Will you really go with me? How good you are. But I must make haste; there is no time to be lost. You will help me, won't you, Aunt Malvina?"

"Certainly," responded Mrs. Gorton, languidly. "Call on Jane for anything you want. She is quite at your service. You had better take a few drops of this nervine. It will compose your head. And, dear, since you are going to the city, I will send and get another bottle of that wine of quinine. Go and fetch me my purse, Jane. You will find it in the second drawer of my bureau, up-stairs. I find it invaluable, especially in any case of sudden excitement," with a reproachful glance at her son.

It seemed as if Jack thought of everything that morning. He ordered Jane to make a cup of strong black tea for Mabel. He went after Burrows, who brought the horse and carriage to the door in five minutes, and then he brushed himself up and stood in the hall with Mab's shawl on his arm, waiting patiently.

"I will come in a moment," cried Mab, putting her pretty golden head over the banisters. "How good you are, Jack. Don't leave me."

Ah! Jack's dream was coming true at last. He had come and gone so long at people's bidding; he had provided this, that, and everything, for everybody, without so much as a "thank you" in return; and Mabel's tears and gratitude, and soft, clinging hands, as they rode away in the cars, touched him pathetically and strangely. Nobody had ever wanted him before, but now Mabel would not let him leave her side once in the course of their brief journey.

"Don't leave me—stay with me—I am afraid!" was her cry, and Jack found it very sweet to protect and comfort her.

The streets on the west side were quite lonely, as they drove rapidly through the city, in the late August afternoon. Dust lay heavy and thick on the brown-stone fronts, the shutters in the windows were all drawn, and it was quite evident that fashion had not yet come back from its summering out of town.

"Oh, what a stifling air," cried Mab; "and to think that poor papa has been breathing it, without a day's rest, all summer, while we were enjoying ourselves in the cool country. No wonder he gave out at last. And I was just as selfish as the others. I never left him before, and I am bitterly punished for it."

As they neared Mr. Miller's house, a building conspicuous for elegance even among the elegant ones about it, they saw unexpected signs of occupancy. Boxes stood at the basement door, the blinds were up, and pillows and gayly-colored rugs were lying in the balconies to air.

"What can it mean?" cried Mab, looking out of the carriage-window. "Have they got a nurse for him? Do you think he is dead?"

She sprang out of the carriage as soon as it stopped, and running up the steps gave such a ring at the bell as must have roused all the neighborhood, had there been any neighborhood to hear. The door was quickly opened, and Jack, following close behind and looking over Mab's shoulder, with a somewhat startled face saw a tall, stylish woman, wrapped in a dressing-gown, with an abundance of curled gray hair somewhat frizzled, standing to receive them.

"Mabel," exclaimed this lady in a surprised, and, Jack fancied, a displeased tone. "You here?—how unexpected!—dear!—dear!"

"Mamma!" cried Mabel, aghast. "When did you come, and how is papa?—is he very, very sick? Let me go to him at once."

"What do you mean, child? Your father is not sick. We came on the boat yesterday to meet the Proctor family from New Orleans, who are going on with us to Niagara. And I have given your room to Lizzie Proctor. Dear, dear! how unfortunate that you came."

"I imagined, foolishly that papa was sick," explained Mabel in tears. "This is Mr. Gorton, mamma; Jack Gorton, you know; he was very kind, and came down with me to take care of me. I did not get a letter from papa this morning, and I came home thinking he must be ill."

"It was quite unnecessary," said Mrs. Miller, coldly, bowing to Jack. "Your father wrote a note for you yesterday afternoon; he left it with us, but I am afraid that in our hurry we neglected to post it."

She walked to the side-table, and after fumbling a moment came back with the familiar-looking envelope in her hand.

"Here is your letter. How unfortunate that it was not posted. I don't know where we shall put you. There is not a bed empty in the house. Mr. Gorton—I am so sorry—but—but—"

"We are going back at once. Mabel is not intending to stay," now cried Jack, finding his tongue and opportunity to speak together. "Mab, dear, you can read your letter in the carriage, can't you? It is waiting. We must catch the return train."

He hurried her away without so much as waiting to make a civil adieu to Mrs. Miller, who, finding that they were really going, began to murmur polite platitudes. "She was so sorry; Mr. Gorton must come some other time with dear Mab; Mr. Miller would be so happy, &c., &c."

Jack did not stop to listen. His one idea was to get Mabel away under his own loving wing once more. But instead of driving to the station, as they had an hour to spare, he took her to Parker's and ordered a delicious lunch at which they sat laughing and happy as a young prince and princess.

"I did not tell you what was in my letter from papa. You don't know why I was so willing to come away with you," said Mabel, gleefully. "Read this."

It was just a hurried scrawl from Mr. Miller to his favorite daughter, telling her that he was going north on business, and should stop at Gorton Place to see his Mab. He should be there at two o'clock, and perhaps should stop over night with her and his friends.

"Why didn't you tell me before," cried Jack in consternation. "We must telegraph to him at once, and tell him that we are coming back. He will naturally be quite anxious," and Jack hurried away to send the message.

"How good you are," said Mabel over and over, when they were in the carriage, and on the way to the train once more, and Jack was showing his care for her with tender looks and ways. "How good you are. You are very foolish to take so much trouble, Jack. I am not worth it."

"I dare say I am foolish," answered Jack, a little sorrowfully. He was thinking how soon this bright day would be gone and forgotten. He was very happy, but it was with an odd, disquieting, uncertain sort of happiness; and who could tell how bitter the pain might be to come after it, when Mabel had left him forever.

"I dare say I am very foolish," he repeated.

Mabel blushed, looking hurt and offended. When a young girl depreciates herself, you may be sure she is only half in earnest. When she says to a young man who worships her, "I am not worthy of your love, you are very foolish," it is only that he may with sweet words defend her against herself, the gentle enemy. She knows that she is worthy of his love, worthy of all love and homage and tenderness that the world has to give. And she is right.

"It is only for a little time, you know," said Mab, coldly. "Papa will take me off your hands as soon as we get home."

Jack turned pale. "It is not that, Mabel, I was thinking of. You know very well that I would willingly go on serving you forever. Oh, Mab, darling! won't you stay with me always?"

Mabel's head drooped, and a rosy flush overspread her face.

"Tell me!" pleaded Jack, catching her hands. "Oh, Mab, darling, I would serve you so well always. I would be so good to you: say yes."

And Mab, blushing redder and redder, muttered something about "papa," and "papa's consent." But why should Mr. Miller refuse? Do papas ever refuse when the young princes, rich, amiable and good-looking, ask for their daughters? And Jack was all of these, only a little shy, and needing a wife's love and tenderness to make a proud man of him.

So he won his sweetheart after all, through faithful serving, just as Jacob did before him, long ago. Serving! What a pretty word it is. But did it never occur to you, after reading the lovely old Hebrew legend, to wonder if Jacob served as faithfully *after* he had won Rachel as before? Was he gentle and patient and kind, or did he think it "no matter," since she was his?

The old nursery rhyme tells us that when Jack fell down and broke his crown, Gill came tumbling after. If our Jack were to lose his temper and storm, would Gill storm too? or— But there! What is the use of forecasting clouds? Let us rather wish them good luck, long life and happiness, and fling an old shoe after them as they ride away in the wedding chariot.

The Dropped Handkerchief in Watkins Glen.

BY MARK EDWARDS.

"What is that white object lying yonder, Mr. Agnew?"

"A lady's handkerchief!" cried the gentleman as he sprang to pick it up. And a dainty piece of embroidered cambric it proved to be.

"There must have been a party earlier than we; and we thought we were the first to enter the Glen this morning. The name, Phil?" said another.

"Em-ma Weeks," read the young man. "Now where is the owner?"

"On ahead most likely."

"I hope we shall see some one young and pretty," said Mr. Agnew, with a laugh, "and then I'll manage to form her acquaintance on the strength of this."

"Well, I trust it will have the usual romantic ending," observed a third speaker. But as he strolled along examining the various points of interest in the charming spot, Philip Agnew forgot all about the handkerchief.

He was one of a gay party who had determined upon an early morning visit to the Glen, before others came to share its beauties, as it was thought that the seclusion would be more charming if enjoyed by themselves alone. Therefore, well prepared for the stroll, they had left their hotel even before it was fairly day.

Philip Agnew, the handsomest male member of the party, notwithstanding his declared appreciation of feminine loveliness, has as yet proved practically indifferent to it. He was a bachelor still, after years of society going.

"Oh, dear! I'm tired!" sighed one of the less enthusiastic of the lady explorers at last.

"I propose that we rest awhile—here at this very point;" said one of the gentlemen. "What an attractive name it has—Wedded for Life; from those two trees, I suppose, joined together so curiously."

"Wedded for life indeed! Now isn't that beautiful—and suggestive!"

"Call our party together, and we will have a rest period. How they are scattered! Call over their names," directed Mr. Agnew.

This was severally done—and responses were made to each.

"Now we are all here, except—Emma Weeks;" laughed Rob Mason.

"I declare!" cried Sue Gillingham.

"You declare what?" asked her escort; for there had been a great deal of something expressed in her tones.

"Why, just beyond those bushes yonder are a gentleman and two ladies—do you not see them? and as that last name was called I am sure I saw one of the ladies start as if it belonged to her."

"What an acute observer you are, Miss Gillingham. I did not see the persons themselves until you called my attention to them. One of the ladies is the owner of the handkerchief, I'll wager my hat."

"Phil, now's your chance," whispered one of the gentlemen. "The owner of that bit of dry-goods is just ahead yonder."

The presence of the then strangers, until now undiscovered, was, of course, quickly commented upon, and their appearance also, for both ladies were very agreeable-looking indeed.

"I'll make sure that one of them is Emma Weeks," said Philip Agnew in an actual excitement of interest. "Now, some of you watch, and I'll call the name again."

He did so, and the effect as observed left no doubt that the owner of the handkerchief was then in sight.

Philip Agnew then, as good as his word, advanced toward the strangers, politely apologized for the use that had been made of the presumed name of one of the ladies, and presented the handkerchief in the most cavalier manner possible.

Smiles and gracious words were returned him, and common acquaintance was quickly formed. An invitation by Philip to join his party was accepted by the strangers, and the four laughingly went back to "Wedded for Life" Point, where the others interestedly awaited them.

There was a happy look of triumph in Philip's eyes. Miss Weeks—for not to spoil or prevent the romance, the owner of the handkerchief was unmarried—was a lady worthy of any man's admiration, and our handsome bachelor felt a fluttering in his bosom as he regarded her, decidedly greater in degree than he had ever experienced before.

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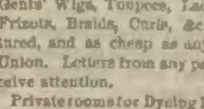

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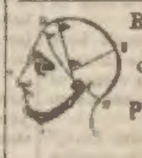

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No more, as once, hand throbbing into hand,
We gaze while slow the glowing sunset dies;
No more, when twilight settles o'er the land,
I turn to find my light within thine eyes.

No more we gather in the meadows wide
The daisies white with which to bind my hair;
No more I look on thee, and feign to chide
Thy dear solicitude, thy tender care.

Thou art away: oh, love! oh, death! how long
Shall I with dim eyes watch the fading day,
And hear blest wives and mothers hum to sing
Of household peace—then kneel alone to pray!

WHEN THE SHADOW LIFTS!

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

Miss Wentworth came up the path slowly. Aunt Betsey—she was "Aunt Betsey" to the whole neighborhood—who had been watching her through her spectacles ever since she came through the gate, wondered for the hundredth time at least, what sorrow could cling to a life so young as hers, and leave so deep a shadow on her face.

For Miss Wentworth's face was not a happy one. It was like a child's when it is in dread. The blue eyes seemed always full of expectation, and the shadow in them told that that which was expected was something bitter and fearful.

Miss Wentworth's face was a pure and truthful one. Aunt Betsey could see that whatever the sorrow of her life consisted in, it was not the sorrow of guilt. From the day when Miss Wentworth came to board in the family, Aunt Betsey had liked her, and, as the weeks went by, and she grew to know the girl better, she felt satisfied that the shadow on her heart came from something beyond herself.

"I want to get away from the world," the girl had said, when she sought a home in the farm-house. "At least from all of the world I know anything about. I want quiet and rest. I am tired."

She never said anything about her friends, and Aunt Betsey sometimes wondered if she had any. She was silent as to her past, and Aunt Betsey understood well enough that her boarder wanted it to be as a book that is closed and laid away. What she dreaded most was that something might open it at one of its bitter pages, and she should be obliged to go over the pitiful story again.

She had secured the little country school, and had at once won the good-will of the children, and with them for her friends, it was easy for her to get into the good graces of their parents. Everybody liked Miss Wentworth; she was so quiet, so thoroughly lady-like and kind.

"I have brought you a letter," she said, as she came up the steps. "Perhaps it is the one you have been looking for so long."

"I shouldn't wonder," answered Aunt Betsey, as she took the letter. "You look jest tired out. Set down here in this rocker, an' let me bring you a good, cold drink of water."

"Oh, don't mind me," said Miss Wentworth, dropping her straw hat on the floor, and sitting down in the doorway, in a dejected way, her head drooping on her hands wearily. "I am tired, I guess, and—and—"

Her words were drowned in a sudden fit of weeping. The lonesome, sorrowful pain at her heart, which she had striven to keep out of sight as much as possible was up in arms to-night, and overcame her.

"Poor thing," said Aunt Betsey, gently, her kind eyes full of tears, and her face full of sympathy. And having said that, she was at a loss what further to say and do to comfort this girl whose trouble she knew nothing of.

Miss Wentworth got up and went up to her room. And when tea was ready she did not come down. She had a headache, she said.

"A heartache, more likely," Aunt Betsey said to her husband, as they sat down to supper. "Poor thing! I feel sorry for her."

After supper was out of the way, Aunt Betsey bethought herself of her letter, and sat down to read it.

It was from her nephew, who held a position on a newspaper in the city. Every summer he came out to spend a few weeks on the farm.

It was quite dusky when Aunt Betsey folded up her letter. As she slipped it back into its envelope, Miss Wentworth came down-stairs. There were traces of tears about her eyes yet.

"I have just ben a-readin' my letter," said Aunt Betsey, anxious to keep Miss Wentworth's mind off its troubles. "It's from Harry—that's the nephew I wastellin' you about, you know. He's comin' Monday. I'm real glad, for he's one of the best-natured fellows livin', an' he'll cheer us all up a bit, I'll warrant. Nobody has the blues when Harry's 'round. You'll like him, I'm sure; young folks is allus the best company for young folks."

And on Monday, when Miss Wentworth came home from school, she saw a young man leaning on the garden gate, and knew that Harry Fields had come.

He did not see her until she had reached the gate. He looked up suddenly to find her standing there.

"Excuse me," he said opening the gate for her to pass. "Have I been keeping you out?"

"Oh, no," answered Miss Wentworth. "I had just reached the gate when you looked up and saw me."

"Harry, that's Miss Wentworth," called out Aunt Betsey from the porch. "I want you to be gettin' acquainted."

"I am happy to meet Miss Wentworth," said Harry, with an amused look in his frank brown eyes. "Let us be friends," he added, holding out his hand toward her. "I already feel quite well acquainted with you, for Aunt Betsey has been telling me about you."

She gave him her hand, and said a few simple words in reply, while Harry's handsome eyes were on her face in a look of earnest admiration.

"It seems pleasant to be back here again," he said, after that little interval of silence common to the opening stages of an acquaintance. "Everything seems so peaceful and quiet here."

"Yes, there is peace and quiet here," she said, and Harry saw a little shadow darken in her eyes, as if she was remembering a time when there was not peace and quiet in her life.

And so began the friendship of Harry Fields and Miss Wentworth.

"I like her very much," he told Aunt Betsey, when he had been there a week. "She seems to have known a great deal of trouble, and she can't get rid of the shadow of it. Perhaps the trouble is not over yet. Has she ever told you of her past life?"

"Not a word," answered Aunt Betsey. "She don't like to think of it, I know."

Something of the pain faded out of Miss Wentworth's face after a little. Harry's cheerful laugh and happy spirits helped her to forget for the time some of those things she would fain have forgotten wholly. But that could not be.

He read to her and walked with her in the pleasant country lanes, and through the orchard paths; and there were quiet, pleasant little talks in the garden among the late roses and lilies. And over all was the spell of youth and summer-time. What wonder that he learned to love the woman with the sweet, sorrowful eyes, and the patient face!

There would be days together when she seemed to shun him; when it seemed as if she felt that it were better for them to be apart. Then she would suddenly change in her behavior and brighten up, as she always did when Harry was near, and he would fancy that she cared for him; and thinking this, he would grow tenderer in voice and manner, as men do when they are with the woman they love; and then, when it seemed but a step more to complete happiness, she would suddenly become distant and reserved, and he would see no more of her for a long time, except when they met at the table. And always when she held herself aloof in this way, he noticed that the shadow on her face was deeper, and the sorrow in her eyes was pitiful to see. At such times he longed to take her in his arms and comfort her.

One evening he met her in the garden. She had avoided him for several days, and now that a chance presented itself, he determined that there should be some kind of an understanding between them.

"I didn't know that you were here," she said, in a kind of frightened way, and he heard a quiver in her voice. "I—I think I will go in."

"Not yet, Ethel," he said, putting out a hand to keep her back. He had never called her Ethel before, and he saw the brief color that came in her cheeks as he spoke it. Then the flush died away and left her very pale.

"Please let me go," she pleaded. "Indeed, I must."

"Wait," he said. "I want to talk with you. I can't stand this any longer. I want to know how the matter is between us. Oh, Ethel, I love you."

The young man's voice was full of strong and earnest passion. His handsome face was all a-glow with it.

"Oh, why have you told me this!" she cried, as if he had dealt her a strong blow. "I had enough to bear before, God knows."

"Ethel," and his arms were around her, his strong, brave arms, that would count it pleasure to shield her from all the world henceforth, "let me help you, if I can, and tell me that you care for me a little. You do, don't you, Ethel?"

She turned her white, pitiful face to his, and he knew well enough then that she loved him.

"Let me go," she cried, freeing herself from his arms. "I want to tell you something. I ought to have told you a long time ago; I ought to have gone away from here when you came. I never would have told you, if—if it hadn't come to this, but the truth must be told now. I am another man's wife."

"My God, Ethel!" he cried, reeling as if with sudden faintness, "what do you mean?"

"I mean what I said," she answered, drearily. "Sit down here, and let me tell you all about it. You have a right to know."

She made a place for him beside her, on the little rustic bench under the elm, and then, looking straight before her, with a wild, unutterable pain in her face, she told her story.

"I was married when I was only sixteen, to a man who was comparatively a stranger to me. I had known Hugh Wentworth scarcely a month when my father told me that I was to marry him. I refused to do so, but my father's threats prevailed, and I was forced to obey. What influence Hugh Wentworth had over my father I never knew, but in his hands my father was as a child. I knew before we had been married a month, that my husband was a bold, bad man. Often, when under the influence of liquor, he beat me; and sometimes I thought he would kill me. For two years I stayed beneath his roof; and then, when life had become a curse to me, I left him, and tried to hide myself where he would never find me. But he did find me, and I had to go back to the old life—and I dragged out two years more of living death. I think he got so that he hated me at last, because he could not make me as bad as he was. Often I hoped he was going to kill me—but he was never merciful enough for that. Then, in some way, a knowledge of his wrong-doings got to the ears of justice—and one day he was arrested. He swore, when the officers took him away, that I had been the cause of it; and in his awful rage he threatened, if he ever got away, to make my life tenfold more miserable than it had been. As if he could do that! I never knew who caused his arrest, but *I* was innocent. I did not know how bad, how great a villain he was until he was tried; and then I felt faint and dizzy every time I thought of the years—such long, terrible years, they seemed—that I had lived with him. He was sentenced to ten years in State's prison, and he is there now. I saw him the day before they took him away; I went to tell him that I had nothing to do with his being brought to justice. I didn't want him to believe that of me, because, bad as he was, bad as I had known him to be, I had been, or had tried to be, a faithful wife to him. But he would not listen to a word of mine; and the last words he said, were, to tell me how much he would cause me to suffer when he was free. Since then I have not known what peace really is. I have heard that he was to be pardoned out; and I am haunted by a constant fear of meeting him some time when I least expect it. He will seek me out, I know. I have felt a greater sense of safety here, than anywhere else, because it is so far away from the scene of all my trouble; and seems so far away from the great world outside. But he would find me even here."

Her face was white with pain, with fear, it might be.

"My poor darling!" he cried, folding her in his arms—his voice broken and low. "Must this man's life stand between us?"

"Don't!" she said, wearily. "If I had told you this before, it would have saved you so much of sorrow. Oh, why did you come here?"

And suddenly her face grew wet with tears, and she sobbed like a child, in an utter abandon of grief.

"Ethel, tell me one thing," he said, earnestly. "Have I been mistaken—or do you love me? You cannot refuse to answer my question."

"Oh, I *do* love you," she cried. "And because I love you, because I know that you are suffering too, my load seems heavier to bear. Oh, it's such a sorrowful world! I wish I were done with it."

"And you do love me, Ethel!" The knowledge was so sweet to him that for a moment he forgot all else.

"I have tried to keep away from you, I have tried not to love you," she said, getting up. "But sometimes our hearts are wilful, and they get the mastery of us. If you could have escaped without suffering, it would not have seemed so hard for me. A little more doesn't matter so much to one who has so much to bear. But you—"

"My poor, unselfish Ethel," he said, while his honest eyes were full of tears. "You think only of what my pain is, and forget yourself. If I could only help you bear your burden—if I could only lift it from your shoulders wholly, I would gladly do so."

"But you can't," she said, drearily. "I don't want you to forget me, and yet it would be better for us both if you were to do so."

"Don't ask me to do that," he said.

"I couldn't do it. I don't want to. I shall always remember you as the one woman in the world to me."

"I must go now," she said, with a shiver. "I am sorry that I have brought any bitter experience into your life, but I was not to blame. I tried not to be! Let us be friends; we can be nothing more. Think only of me as one who always wishes you the best of earthly things, and keep a pleasant memory of you."

"You don't know how much I care for you if you deem I can think of you merely as a friend," he said. "You are the only woman I ever loved. I shall always remember you as such. Some day the shadow may clear away from your life, and when the shadow lifts, darling, then!"

"I do not dare to think of it," she said. "But I must go in. Dear friend, good-night, and God bless you."

He bent down and kissed her in reverent tenderness. And then she went away, and he was alone with his loss and disappointment.

There was no mention of that night's event between them after that. He saw how much she had to bear, and felt that it would be as cruel as it was useless for him to speak one word of love to her whom he loved so earnestly.

And by and by he went back to the city. He gave her his hand in a silent parting, but the deep and yearning tenderness in his eyes spoke a language that she understood. Perhaps her face held an answer for him to read, and to remember when he was away. If it did, it was because her heart *would* speak at the last.

And so they parted, and he went back to the busy life of the crowded city to be always haunted by a face full of a white, settled sorrow, out of which looked that painful dread which was ever with her. And she went on her quiet way, remembering how near, and yet how far away, happiness had been to her in the summer-time gone by. So near and yet so very far away!

Harry Fields stood on the platform of the crowded car, and watched the men and women surging past in a restless, hurrying way, as if some impulse outside of themselves urged them on.

The train was almost ready to depart. The engine stood motionless like a lion crouched for a wild, swift leap; its great, sinewy limbs shining and sparkling in the sun. Only its slow breathing told that there was life about it.

The men and women clambered up the steps of this car and that one, and were lost sight of. Presently but few persons were left standing on the platform, and the engine-bell gave its warning signal. The passive monster with the shining limbs began to wake up from its lethargy, and stir itself, breathing hard and heavily. The dense, black smoke floated down the train, and wrapped it in its gray folds, and Harry Fields, thinking of the woman he loved, and whose face he was going to see, thought also of the shadow which wrapped itself about her life.

The train moved slowly at first, and then began to quicken its pace. There was a cry near by, and a man ran around a street corner and sprang toward the platform of the car on which Harry stood, just as two men came round the corner in evident pursuit. But the man missed his footing and fell heavily forward—down to his death, Harry knew, as he saw the slipping grasp of the man's hands on the smooth wood-work which was the straw between him and a terrible fate. He sprang to catch the man, but he was too late. The wild, desperate clutch weakened, and then—the wheels of the Juggernaut rolled on—there was one wild, despairing cry, and the end had come.

The train stopped, and a crowd of startled men gathered about the crushed fragments of what had one moment before been a living being. They lifted the body from the track silently in a kind of an awed way. Death, in such a swift fashion, was terrible.

"Who was he?" some one asked, in a low voice as if he feared to break the silence.

"A convict from the prison yonder," answered one of the officers who had been in hot pursuit. "He managed to get a citizen's dress and elude the keeper. We discovered him just as he was leaving the prison-grounds. His name is Wentworth—Hugh Wentworth."

Harry Fields heard it all in a kind of dream. This was all that remained of the man who had stood between him and the woman he loved—this mass of bleeding, senseless, sickening humanity, from which the last spark of life had vanished forever.

Dead!—and she was his now, all his! The scene faded from before him, and he saw her patient face again, but the shadow was lifting from it as a cloud from the morning.

The mangled form was borne away, and the train went on again. It seemed to Harry that it merely crept.

He counted the miles as they passed over them. Nearer and nearer to Ethel, with the blessed tidings of her freedom which had been purchased by death.

At last the end of his journey came. It seemed as if the distance from the village to the old farm had lengthened into miles. But his eager feet bore him rapidly over it. He looked toward the house as he turned the corner and saw a woman standing at the gate. It was she. He should know her anywhere. His Ethel now.

"Ethel! Ethel!" he cried, in his eagerness, and she turned toward him with a soft light breaking through her face's olden shadow.

"Ethel!" and his arms were about her, his kisses on her cheek. "I have brought you—freedom. He is dead, and you are mine now."

And the shadow lifted from Ethel Wentworth's heart and life at last, as may the shadows sometimes lift from yours and mine.

DOUBTFUL LUXURY.

ETHEL.—"Were you not pleased to have such a pretty partner as Miss Myrtle at croquet yesterday, Charlie?"

CHARLIE.—"Well—er—personally, I dislike beauty. Acknowledged belles have a way of making a fellow feel himself of secondary consideration sometimes, don't you know?"

HARVEY MORTON'S VENGEANCE.

BY JACK RATLIN.

"Like ships that sailed for sunny isles,
And never came to shore."

So the Seamew, swinging in the tide of the Delaware, with the "messenger" at the fore, was ready for her outward voyage to the distant East, and Archer Williston standing on her deck, looked anxiously out toward the land which held his treasure. He was young, and youth has its privilege of love and care as well as age—but love is its glory. He had seen care, danger and grief; and now for the first time, he tasted the sweets of love. Not the love of kindred, but the love of man to the woman who is not of his blood, the love which is stronger than death; and that woman he had made his wife, and she was going with him on his voyage, daring the dangers of the sea for his sake.

He heard the dip of oars and saw the boat put out for the ship and come down at the full sweep of the bending ash. He saw her father, gray-haired and bowed with grief; he saw her brothers, young and strong; but his eyes dwelt most upon the girl, who, a month ago, had given him her hand before the altar. The last farewells are said, the boat has left the ship and lies at a little distance, and the "heaving" song is heard as twenty stout men walk the ship up to her anchor. The music is led by a ponderous Dutchman, who can sing nothing else, but who is noted for improvising "heaving songs."

"My Johnny's gone and I'll go too,
Hoo-ray—belgho.
My Johnny's gone, what shall I do,
John's gone, a high low.
Stamp and go."

And, with their brawny bosoms pressed against the bars, the anchor is torn from the ground, catted and fished, the head sails fill, the yards squared, and with the wind on her quarter, the good ship bore away for the China seas; and Mary Williston standing on the quarter-deck looks out with humid eyes for the last glimpse of her kindred. But her husband's arm is about her, and while his eyes are sharp to see that the ship is rightly worked, he finds time to whisper words of comfort in the ears of his darling, who clings to him confidingly, for he is all the world to her now.

And a dark-bearded man standing among the seamen as they hoist the heavy sails mutters to himself, as at times his black eyes fall upon the pair, and a malevolent light shows itself in his fierce glance. When all is done and the ship is gliding on her course, this man, with another, is sent to the helm. His chum is a Lascar, a treacherous-looking dog, as are most of his race, and the hideous grin with which he looks at his chum has something horrible in it.

"Yes, yes, my friend. Revenge and wealth for you—wealth for me. You have the best of it, my good friend."

"You do not live in hell as I do, Lascar," replied the man in a low tone, full of agony. "To see them together, to know that I have played the game and lost, is something fearful to bear. Do I look like a common sailor? do I handle the wheel well?"

"You couldn't do it better."

"My jacket has given me lessons in the art. I wonder if she will be on hand—if I can depend upon the sailing master. If he fails me, woe be to him—that is all."

"No talking there at the wheel," cried the mate, and the men were silent.

The ship passed out of the bay at length, and spreading her wings, headed away upon her course. For two days Mary kept the cabin, and on the third, coming on deck suddenly, she met face to face the bearded man who had talked with the Lascar at the wheel. She started and looked at him wildly. At the moment they were out of sight of every one, and she put out her hands with a gesture of repulsion.

"You here?"

"Yes, Mrs. Williston," he said, "I am here, a common sailor before the mast."

"You shall not stay here," she said. "I will call my husband and tell him all."

"Do; tell him that Harvey Morton won your love, and that you jilted him for a new face."

"You speak falsely, sir. I gave you up because you were a profligate, abandoned to all sense of shame. My husband knows all about it, and you cannot injure me in his esteem. Why did you come here, unless to do us some great wrong?"

"Your husband does not know me," said Harvey Morton, "and the moment you tell him my name and bring me face to face with him, I will kill him before your eyes. There—enough has been said; and as for my purpose, it is not for you to know, except that I promise not to lift my hand against his life. You, and you only are to blame, and you must bear the penalty."

A few words of explanation only are needed. Harvey Morton was a rich, but wildly profligate young man, who had won the love of Mary Herbert before she knew his real character. But when she learned that he was a gambler, libertine and drunkard, she tore his image out of her heart forever. He had sought in various ways to regain her love, and it was not until he saw her married to Archer Williston, master of the Seamew, that he realized how completely he had lost her. Then, I think, he went mad, and we see him on board the Seamew, shipped as a common sailor, for what purpose only one other knew—his Lascar friend.

There was no peace for Mary Williston from the hour she parted with Harvey Morton in the shadow of the cabin. She dared not speak to her husband, for the madman had said he would kill him the moment he suspected that the secret was known. She grew paler day by day, and Harvey Morton noted the fact with devilish glee. At times, as the days passed, this man would go into the top and looking out astern would note with a smile that a peculiarly-shaped sail was visible upon the distant horizon.

On the sixth day, just as the morning broke, he came down from aloft and spoke to his Lascar friend.

"To-night, when I give the word," he said. "Remember, when the alarm is given you must run up those red lanterns on the fore."

The Lascar nodded and passed by. Night came, a calm, peaceful night, and Archer Williston and his wife were on deck. Harvey Morton passed them and went toward the forehatch with a lantern.

"Where are you going?" cried Archer.

"The first mate told me to go down and hook out a cask of pork," replied the man.

"Be careful of your light, then."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Mary stood trembling while they spoke together, and whispered in her husband's ear, requesting him not to let the man go into the hold with the lantern. But he laughed at her, and Harvey went below. Not long after he came up with a ghastly face and closed the hatch. Half an hour later the ship was in confusion, for a volume of black smoke came rolling out of the hatches, and they knew that a most terrible calamity—a fire at sea—threatened them. All that men could do was done, but the ship's hold was a sea of flame, and nothing could save her.

"You dog," cried Archer, facing Harvey Morton, "*you* have done this."

"Yes, yes," screamed the madman—for mad he was. "I did it, none but I; and as you go down, remember Harvey Morton, Lascar, come. I will kill the man that lays a finger on me."

The two darted up to the foretop, and for the first time they saw those red lights gleaming there. As they gazed the mast was seen to sway and totter, and before they could come down it went over the side with a crash. Harvey Morton was seen to strike the water upon his back, and went down with a gurgling cry, never more to be seen by mortal eyes.

The catastrophe had scarcely occurred, when a schooner yacht swept down and hailed them. The boats were lowered and the officers and crew of the Seamew, with all their valuables, were conveyed to the yacht.

"I don't know what to say to you, Captain Williston," said the master of the schooner. "My owner ordered me to follow you and close when I saw three red lights in the top."

"Who is your owner?"

"Mr. Harvey Morton."

"Then he has gone to his reward," said Archer, "for, as I live, he deserved his fate. You will never see him more, for in his mad thirst for vengeance he fell into the pit his own hands had digged."

"He was mad," said Mary, laying her hand upon her husband's arm. "Pray, my husband, that God, who out of this man's wickedness has worked our salvation, may forget his crimes in their atonement."

He pressed his lips to hers and was silent. He forgave Harvey Morton in his watery grave.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

We cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

MOZES, (Philadelphia,) asks: "Will you please inform me how many miles of railroad track there are in the states of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois? Also, the number of miles of track in England?" The latest statistics give the number of miles of *completed* road in Pennsylvania at something over six thousand; in New York over five thousand; in Ohio over four thousand; in Indiana over seven thousand; and in Illinois over four thousand—an aggregate of over twenty-six thousand. This is exclusive of second track, sidings, etc.; and also of city passenger railways. We give the round numbers only as they are sufficient for estimates like the present. England has about thirteen thousand miles of railway.

ALPHA, (Emporia, Kansas,) asks: "1st. When I try to be agreeable to one of the fair sex, I can find nothing interesting to talk of. I am no hand at using the soft nonsense generally used. It is very embarrassing sometimes to all concerned. What can I do to improve my conversational powers? 2d. Does it ever frost with the thermometer above thirty-two degrees? 3d. Is phonography of any use to a farmer? 4th. What studies would a young man have to master before he could learn surveying? 5th. How is my writing, and what is its greatest fault or faults?" 1st. It is to be deplored, we think, when two or more intelligent persons meet, that they can find nothing to talk about. We don't understand it. A subject once introduced, naturally leads on to other subjects, and it seems to us that conversation might easily be maintained without descending to nonsense. Yet we have seen really intelligent persons almost dumb, instead of making themselves mutually agreeable. The only cure for it is a determination "to do better." Conversation is an art not to become perfected in without practice, study and care. Don't endeavor to be too dignified at first. Small talk is not to be despised, but, on the contrary, in the way is very commendable. "Soft nonsense" though, is to be discarded at all times—the fair sex are capable of something better, you may rest assured. As for lovers' talk, *that* is nonsense only when others hear it. 2d. Does frost ever form, we suppose you mean, with the temperature above 32 deg? Never; that is the freezing point, and dew cannot be congealed, and thus changed to frost particles, at a higher temperature. 3d. Of no direct practical use that we can see. All knowledge is, however, useful. 4th. Let him first perfect himself in arithmetic, then take a course of the higher mathematics. The ancient science of geometry grew out of the practice of surveying, and now embodies the mathematical principles upon which the work is conducted. 5th. Fair, but it needs practice and cultivation. It is very legible, and promises to make an excellent hand.

LEO, (Barclaysville, N. C.,) writes: "1st. Will you oblige me by giving a little light on the old French Spoliation Claims? Has the money been paid to the United States? If so why has it never been paid over to those having claims? and as it has not, what can the claimants do to *try* to bring about a settlement that would so much aid many who are now destitute?" 1st. The old French Spoliation Claims have come to be an obscure subject. We can find very little concerning them, and it is not probable that any attempt to revive the matter would result in benefit to claimants. At the same time, if we understand the question, we may add that the Government has been very unjust in this matter.

INQUIRER, (Ackersburg, Pa.,) asks: "1st. Can an administrator become a purchaser of real estate?—the property on which he administers, I mean." No; a person acting as administrator of an estate cannot become a buyer at the sale thereof.

MISS KATE, asks: "Will you please tell me how to pronounce the following words: Guinevere, Lancelot, Gawain, Astolat, Carlleon, Caerlyle, Camelot, Sir Galahad. As you will guess, I have been reading Alfred Tennyson's 'Elaine;' and being a poor scholar, there were many words that I could not pronounce. 2d. Another question. How is my writing?" 1st. Gwin'-e-vere; Lan'-ce-lot; Gaw'-ain; As'-to-lat; Kar'-le-on; Kar'-lyle; Cam'-e-lot; Sir Gal'-a-had. 2d. Your handwriting is fair.

A. B. C., (Durham, N. C.,) asks: "1st. Why are the Irish frequently called Milesians? 2d. What was the 'Feast of the Barmecides?'" 1st. Because according to the legendary history of the country, the Irish, or a portion of them, are descended from King Milesius of Spain, whose two sons conquered the island thirteen hundred years before Christ. 2d. A famous feast in the Arabian Nights, where the guests were served with imaginary viands. The story is that one of the princes of the Barmecide family was asked by a beggar for food, and before it could be brought, called on the mendicant (naming the dishes) to help himself. The beggar humored the joke pretending to eat, and praising each imaginary dish, till he ended by declaring he could eat no more. It is cheaper than dining at the restaurants.

PENN, (Philadelphia,) asks: "1st. If a man marries, having a wife living, and she marries also—they not being divorced—do they commit bigamy, and is their marriage lawful? 2d. If the first husband dies, and she still lives with the second husband, and bears his name as well as several children, does that make it binding or lawful? Can he marry any one else and be clear of her? 3d. Can deserters and bounty jumpers be arrested now—they who enlisted during the rebellion—or did Mr. Lincoln free them all, or can they still be arrested, they being at that time volunteers?" 1st. They both commit bigamy. Their former marriage still holds good, if that is what you mean to inquire. Of course their second marriage is illegal. 2d. It is doubtful what the law would decide in such a case—though, in strict legality, she is not his wife. 3d. Bounty jumpers and deserters are still amenable to the law. President Lincoln never exempted that class of offenders from the penalty to which they subjected themselves. Practically, however, such men are free, as at this late day no one would be likely to move against them.

GEORGE Y., (Marshall Spring, N. C.,) wishes to know: "1st. What are the principal requirements for book-keeping? 2d. Which is the largest city, Brooklyn or Chicago? 3d. How many cables are there between the United States and Europe, and how long have they been laid? 4th. As usual, I ask the question, how is my writing, and what is the worst fault in it? 5th. Do you like to answer such foolish questions?" 1st. Readiness at figures, ability to write a fair hand, and a certain business aptitude and intelligence. The object of book-keeping is everywhere the same—to exhibit in a clear, concise and intelligible manner the primary, progressive and present state of a man's pecuniary affairs. Whoever excels in this, excels in the art of keeping accounts. 2d. Brooklyn has the largest population. 3d. Three. The first was laid in 1858, but soon ceased to work; the next attempt was made in 1865, but the cable broke. In July, 1866, the first successful cable was laid; in July, 1869, the new or French cable. 4th. It needs improvement. It is legible, and yet many of the letters are of irregular formation. Your a's look like o's, &c. We do not feel flattered when *foolish* questions are asked us. If you regard any of yours as such, why do you ask it?

HENRY, (Philadelphia,) writes: "Will you give me your advice upon a subject that worries me very much? There is a young lady whom I have known by sight for a year. I have admired her appearance and manners very much, and I once heard accidentally that some little act of mine had attracted her attention and admiration. We are frequently meeting in the street, in the cars and in places of amusement. We have no mutual friend, and it really seems impossible to be introduced to her. Can't you suggest some way for me to form her acquaintance? I am almost afraid to speak to her in the street, as I know she would consider it great impudence, and right she would be. She is a lady entirely opposite to the 'girl of the period,' and has lived so much with old-fashioned people and apart from young society, that by many she would be considered 'prudish.' So, how to form her acquaintance without shocking her ideas of propriety, has puzzled me. I can tell by her manner when we meet that it is not disagreeable to her; but as to the slightest flirtation with handkerchief, gloves or fan, she will not indulge in. It is by the quietest glance, smile or blush that she acknowledges me my presence, and that is all, except by being part of the regular in the places where we usually meet. There is scarcely a chance in the world of my being introduced to her, so what shall I do? Please help me." The young lady appears to be a modest and sensible person—one whose acquaintance would be desirable. Can you not give some male member of her family (if there be such) or some male friend of hers, evidence of your respectability, and in that way obtain an introduction? We know of no better way.

GEO. W. H., (Philadelphia,) writes in reference to a late subject: "If, instead of vanishing forest leaves, your correspondent oils them with *boiled linseed oil*, and places them where the dust cannot settle on them, they will be much brighter and cleaner than if varnished."

F. H., (Pittsburgh, Pa.,) writes: "1st. Please give me your opinion of telegraph-operating, which I have a great desire to learn. 2d. How is the telegraph business progressing in Philadelphia?" 1st. The business is a good one if you qualify yourself well for it. Good operators command good wages. 2d. At the late election there was a majority of some 30,000 in favor of license; but all temperance men are not prohibitionists.

SIMPLICITY, (Taboton,) thus apostrophizes the page of the correspondents' column: "Oh, epitome of wisdom! How amiable as well as wise thou art! I think your 'scribtsel' should be KNOW ALL! You have proved yourself so kind and wise that I do not feel able to ask for a few crumbs of wisdom from your bountiful feast. Whenever any thing is discussed that I cannot understand, my first thou, bt is that I will ask the 'Post,' but I have never before trespassed upon your time and patience. I am in love, it is true, but feel quite equal to the emergency, and capable of managing my own love affairs, so I will not ask you whether it conveys sense, pink or blue is most becoming to my complexion. But I do want to know: 1st. What is the story of 'Bertha in Temple?' 2d. Why is platonic love so called? 3d. Who was Mephistopheles?' 1st. Beatrice Cenci is sometimes called the 'beautiful parricide.' She was the daughter of Francesco di Cenci, a tyrannical noble, notorious for the wickedness of his life. He made his own child the victim of his evil passions. She appealed to Pope Clement VIII. but in vain, when her mother-in-law and brother, unable to bear the wrongs and cleverness of Beatrice, took the life of the unnatural father. Whether or not his daughter was privy to the plot is unknown, but suspicion fell upon her as well as upon other members of her family, and they were all carried to Rome and subjected to the most frightful tortures. Beatrice constantly asserted her innocence, but was condemned to death, and despite the most earnest efforts to secure her pardon, made by the noblest nobles of Rome, she was executed, September, 1599, along with her relatives. The story of the Cenci has been made the subject of a powerful tragedy by Shelley; and a wonderful portrait of Beatrice (attributed to Guido Reni) is in the gallery of the Colonna Palace at Rome. Copies of it are very common. The story of Charlotte (and Lucy) Temple, by Mrs. Susanna Rowson, had better be read entire. We cannot give even a synopsis of it. The book may be obtained, at a low price, of almost any bookseller. 2d. From the philosopher Plato, who had some faith in that sort of affection. It means love without the desire of possession. 3d. One of the seven principal figures in the old demonology the second of the fallen archangels, and the most powerful of the infernal legions, excepting Satan. He appears in the old legend of Dr. Faustus, as the familiar spirit of that renowned magician, and he name is commonly used as a term of peculiar reproach. To modern readers he is chiefly known as the cold scathing, relentless fiend of Goethe's Faust, and the aristocratic demon in Marlowe's Faustus.

BEATRICE, (Salem Roads.) Our advice to you is to have nothing to do with the ——— lottery scheme, nor with any other. Parties who promise five dollars for one are after the ore themselves. We cannot explain the "French pool" game in our columns. The less you know about that the better. Your handwriting is poor.

C. A., (Oshkosh, Ill.,) asks: "Will you have the kindness to inform me how to pronounce the following names: Mme. Scheron, Le Clercq, Lucca?" Neef-son, L-clare'; Lu'-ca.

[Several letters are now over to be answered in our next.]